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Marlin

VOL. 34 _ NO. 8 _ DECEMBER / JANUARY 2016

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A greyhounding black marlin, especially one coming at you, raises the adrenaline of everyone in the cockpit.

PHOTO BY
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EDITOR'S LETTER

UNRIVALED EXCITEMENT

"Right teaser, right teaser!"

I heard those words from the bridge just before seeing my first blue marlin attempt to devour a Mold Craft teaser. The adrenaline rush that followed threw me into warp speed as I attempted to feed a blue for the first time, missing the fish not once but twice as the captain bellowed a few choice words. Thankfully, the fish was hungry and came back a third time. I dropped back the mahimahi belly rigged with a circle hook and a chugger head one last time and finally came tight. Recalling my first experience with a blue is all but a blur from the excitement.

The sight of a billfish in the spread still gets my heart racing even after experiencing it hundreds of times. Now, those adrenaline-filled moments take place in slow motion, and I relish every detail of the encounter. It's hard to explain to people who have never truly experienced it, but the seconds between a fish charging hot on a teaser and getting it to switch over to a pitch bait are arguably the most exciting moments in all of sports. It's a true rush.

As I step into my new role as Editor-in-Chief of *Marlin*, I have a very similar feeling — an unrivaled excitement. On the heels of our recent redesign and several other projects in the works, my anticipation for the future of the brand is all but equal to seeing a blue marlin pounce on a lure and instantly greyhound into the distance.

I picked up my first copy of *Marlin* 20-some years ago during a family vacation to the Outer Banks. It was filled with awe-inspiring photos, gorgeous sport-fishing boats and tales from fishing adventures all over the world, and I was instantly hooked on everything to do with big-game fishing. Although there weren't any billfish flags flying after that trip, I did have to stand on the cooler to make sure it closed as mahimahi tails stuck out the side. Things have certainly changed on the pages of *Marlin* over the years, but the spirit of camaraderie and exotic adventure that first amazed me two decades ago in North Carolina continues today.

You'll find that spirit in Sam White's story "Pass the Torch" about five of the top family-friendly billfish destinations. It's not only a great read that brings back a lot of personal memories, but it has plenty of advice to put to use in 2016.

If you've got kids or grandchildren of your own, or a spouse itching to join on your next offshore adventure, there is no better way to spend time with the family. Whether chasing mahimahi to keep the rod bent or in pursuit of your child's royal slam, one of the most exciting parts of big-game fishing is sharing the experience with others. I'm honored to share the stories that follow with you.

Andrew Cox
Editor-in-Chief
andrew.cox@marlinmag.com

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DAVE FERRELL EDITOR-AT-LARGE
PETER B. WRIGHT EDITOR-AT-LARGE
STEPHANIE PANCRAZ SENIOR MANAGING EDITOR
MEGAN WILLIAMS MANAGING EDITOR
CHRIS MCGLINCHY ART DIRECTOR
JARROD GLICK ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR
DAVE CARRIERE COPY EDITOR
CHRIS BALOGH DIGITAL EDITOR

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

KARL ANDERSON SHIP'S SYSTEMS
RANDY VANCE ELECTRONICS

CONTRIBUTORS

John Ashley, Capt. Randy Baker, Bill Boyce, Corky Decker, Jan Fogt, Pat Ford, Richard Gibson, Scott Kerrigan, Ken Kreisler, George Sawley, Dave Underwood, Jason "Tiny" Walcott, Sam White

NATASHA LLOYD PUBLISHER

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL SALES
954-760-4602 / natasha.lloyd@bonniercorp.com

SCOTT SALYERS FISHING GROUP PUBLISHER / scott.salyers@bonniercorp.com

DAVE MOREL NORTHEAST AND WEST COAST SALES; 407-718-6891
dave.morel@bonniercorp.com

ANDREW W. TOWNES III MIDWEST SALES, TELEVISION, EVENTS; 407-571-4730
drew.townes@bonniercorp.com

MARK BADZINSKI TOURNAMENTS, BROKERAGE; 407-571-4618 / mark.badzinski@bonniercorp.com

BILL SIMKINS CHARTER BOATS, MARKETPLACE; 407-571-4865 / bill.simkins@bonniercorp.com

DAN JACOBS TOURNAMENTS AND EVENT PRODUCTION; 407-571-4680
dan.jacobs@bonniercorp.com

MISSIE PRICHARD EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT; 407-571-4692

MATT HICKMAN VP, DIRECTOR OF BRAND STRATEGIES

SHAWN BEAN EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

MARK MACKENZIE CONTENT STRATEGY DIRECTOR

JERRY POMALES CREATIVE DIRECTOR

GREG TINDEL CONSUMER MARKETING DIRECTOR

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MIKE STALEY ONLINE DIRECTOR

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CONTRIBUTIONS: Address all editorial correspondence to Editor, Marlin Magazine, P.O. Box 8500, Winter Park, FL 32790; editor@marlinmag.com. All manuscripts and letters sent to Bonnier Corporation will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and are subject to editing. Bonnier Corporation does not necessarily endorse authors' views. Bonnier Corporation is not responsible for loss of or damage to manuscripts, photography or art. Return postage must accompany material if it is to be returned. Entire contents copyright 2015 by Bonnier Corporation. May not be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of Bonnier Corporation.

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editor@marlinmag.com
460 N. Orlando Ave., Suite 200,
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marlinmag.com/newsletter

CORRECTION

On Page 4 of our October issue, we called the airborne marlin on the cover a black marlin when in fact it was a blue.



editor@marlinmag.com

A DIFFERENT LINE OF THOUGHT

Andrew Cox's argument for increasing minimum size of blue marlin landings in tournaments [Conservation, October 2015; "Changing Weight Classes"] has merit for reducing the numbers killed annually. Recreational fishermen, crews and tournament organizers have a responsibility to demonstrate another conservation ethic here, particularly with the biological status of these magnificent fish in doubt. But an argument for increasing to a 500-pound minimum has other potentially serious biological consequences and should not be overlooked. It emphasizes killing the biggest and most biologically prolific of this species – females – at a time when we are learning the importance of protecting the largest individuals in a resource.

Unlike many mammals, including humans, most species of fish keep reproducing throughout their lives and as they age. In billfish, their annual fecundity, the reproductive capacity or number of eggs produced by an individual, increases dramatically with size and age. In several recent nonbillfish studies, researchers determined that these species not only produced more eggs, but the eggs can be of higher quality than those of smaller individuals. Presumably, the resulting larval forms are stronger and grow faster, and are better able to resist starvation in a competitive oceanic environment. These potential attributes for spawning big blue marlin and other species should not be dismissed. For example, a 1,000-pound blue marlin will likely produce and seasonally shed in fractional batches about 100 million ripe eggs annually. And who's to say that the older individuals don't get more successful repeating the spawning act over 10 to 20 years?

Perhaps this line of thought deserves more attention in our billfish tournaments and fisheries management decisions?

John W. Jolley

Former senior fisheries scientist, State of Florida;
current scientific adviser to the West Palm Beach Fishing Club



PETER B. WRIGHT

I am very disappointed to hear that Capt. Wright will no longer be working for the magazine. Peter has forgotten more about marlin fishing than most of us will ever know. As a marlin fisherman, I will certainly miss Capt. Wright, and I wish you would reconsider your decision and allow Peter to continue to write for the magazine. If it is your desire to be the best marlin-fishing magazine, then you should reconsider and include Capt. Wright in your magazine. If you are not worried about being the best, then continue to exclude him in the future.

Michael D. Scott
Corpus Christi, Texas

Peter will continue to work with and contribute to Marlin in different capacities and be fully involved in Marlin U. – Ed.



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October's Conservation column ["Changing Weight Classes"] also prompted a lot of chatter and debate on *Marlin's* Facebook page (facebook.com/marlinmag).

KEITH ENGLISH

It is time to raise Gulf minimum lengths. Bigger boats and longer ranges have opened up more fishing grounds, which has led to larger and more fish being caught in tournaments. To preserve our fishery, we need to think about three, five, 10 years down the road to ensure we do not see a decline in stocks and make sure our children see the same size and quantity of fish we have currently, or even better, an increase in both.

CHRIS MARLIN HOOD

Absolutely agree! I've been saying this for a while now. Kill length needs to be set at 110 inches. Question is, how do we convince tournament directors whose main objective is to bring people to their venue via dead blue marlin?

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LET'S BUILD A MILESTONE

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HOT SHOTS

DOUBLE THE FUN!

Raul Boesel Jr. captured this fantastic pre-release photo of the first sailfish from a doubleheader caught by the crew aboard *Priceless*. They fed the pair of sails live herring while kite-fishing during a tournament practice day.

LOCATION

Shot while fishing on the famous county wrecks off Miami aboard *Priceless*, a 48-foot Viking, with Capt. Tido Sanchez.



TECH SPECS

CAMERA:

Canon 7D in Nauticam housing

LENS:

Tokina 10-17mm f/3.5-f/4.5

ISO:

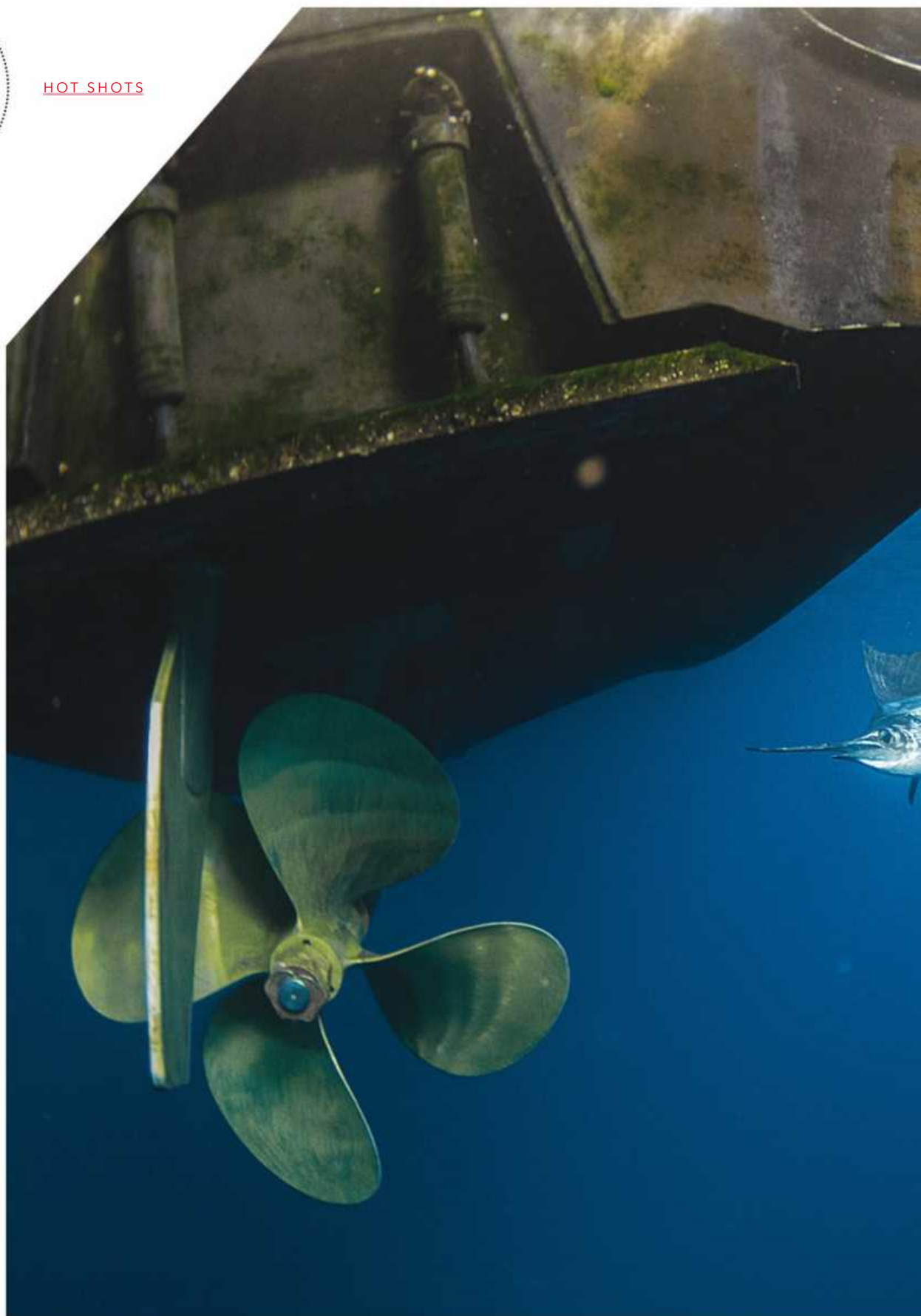
640

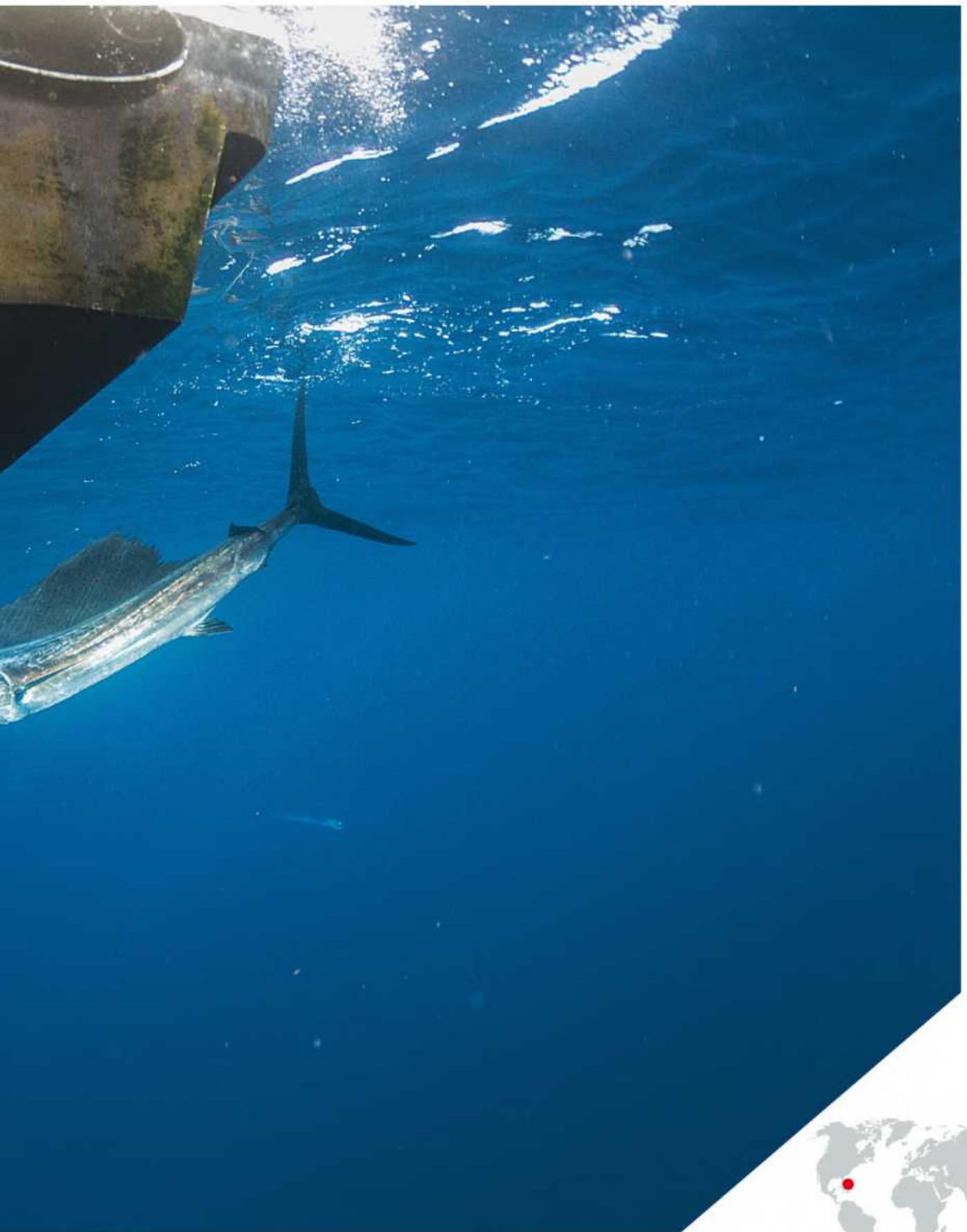
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Before *the* Strike

ROB GOTHIER JR.
AND BAR SOUTH
LOOK TO REPEAT
AS CHAMPIONS
IN THE QUEST
FOR THE CREST
CIRCUIT.



BY ANDREW COX

Rob Gothier Jr.

The *Bar South* crew, led by owner Rob Gothier Jr., dominated the South Florida sailfish scene last year aboard its 60-foot *Spencer*, winning the Quest for the Crest series and taking home more than \$358,000 from the four events.

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GREG GAWLIKOWSKI

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Big-game gurus fix
common mistakes

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Thirty years since
historic sailfish catch

32 **RIGGER'S CORNER**
The best circle hook
connections for billfish

What advantages does the Spencer give you?



Speed, both in forward and reverse. It's remarkably agile and backs up quickly for a 60-footer; we released a 400-pound blue marlin in nine minutes during this year's White Marlin Open. With twin 1,650 hp Caterpillar C32s, it cruises at 37 knots and can push it up to 42 or 43 knots on the pins. When it's rough during sailfish season and we have 4- to 5-footers, we have the advantage of being a big boat with speed that can pass the center-consoles and beat them to the bite. We just added a Contender 35T with trip Yamahas and a tower to use as a bait boat or a backup in case we can't fish the big boat during a tournament.

SUCCEEDING ON THE SAILFISH CIRCUIT

But Bar South wasn't always winning tournaments and sizable checks. Four years ago, Gothier began to put together the ingredients he believed were needed to get the program to the winners circle. He hired Capt. Jim Mulcahy, a Florida Keys native and charter captain, and added other key team members. As the Bar South team prepares for its sixth South Florida sailfish-tournament season, Gothier opened up to Marlin about the team's success and its plans to repeat this year.

M *The Quest saw stiff competition last year, but you guys came through during the Final Sail. Give me the play-by-play.*

We started the season off quickly and took first place in Operation Sailfish, releasing 12 sails and winning more than \$157,000. Fishing was slow during the Sailfish 400, and we caught only three fish, finishing in 19th and taking home a daily. We placed third in the Sailfish Challenge and caught 13 to finish fifth at the Final Sail, completing the series with 36 sailfish and a total of 97 points, based on our position in each of the tournaments.

M *What kind of preparation goes into having a season like that?*

The team fished together more than 60 days last year for sailfish in South Florida, and then another 30-plus days for marlin up the East Coast. We put effort into the small — but important — details like rigging and solid communication to make sure everything goes right on tournament days. We pride ourselves on having high-quality bait and also make sure to have an assortment of species in case the fish are eating better on small or large bait that particular day.

M *Where do you guys get your edge?*

Our team works extremely hard, and there isn't a weak link to be found. What makes us dangerous in a tournament is our bite-to-catch ratio, which averages right around 95 to 98 percent. If our numbers are any lower than that as a team, we consider it a complete failure of a tournament or even a practice day. When we have that kind of consistency on the rod, it comes down to making sure we put ourselves in the right spot to produce bites.

M *What's the annual schedule for your program?*

We fish six to seven tournaments during the year and plan to expand the tournament schedule in the coming years. We've fished the White Marlin Open and the MidAtlantic 500 the past two years, in addition to several sailfish tournaments, and did very well in both of those. We have Skip Smith's tournaments on the radar because his format plays well into our strengths as a team and I enjoy hooking my own fish. I'm hesitant to expand the program too much with too many destinations because of time away from my family, and I don't see a reason to fish many of the smaller tournaments if there isn't any money involved.

M *What's your outlook for this season?*

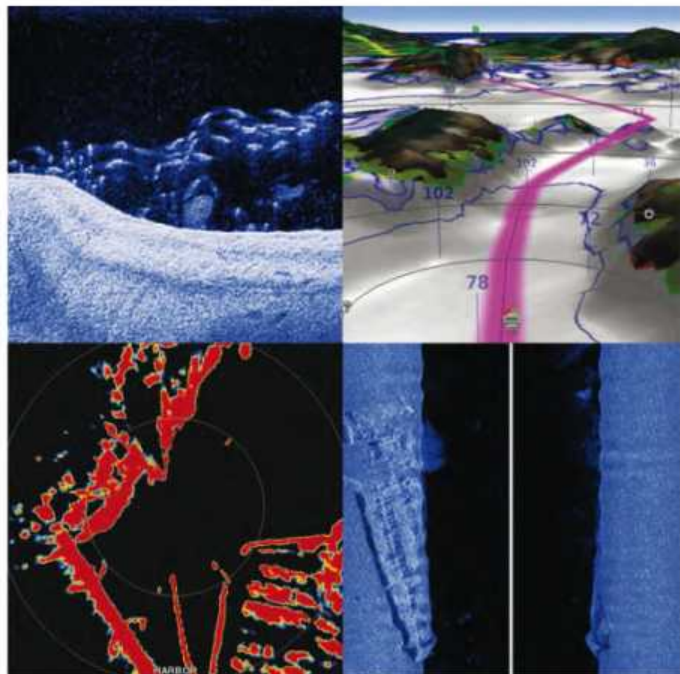
We are due to have another big season. The fish are already showing up in South Florida, and we are excited to get dialed in and back out there doing what we love. 🐟

The right guys on the team?

We just have some really fishy guys. Everyone from Jim [Mulcahy], Justin Miller, Shay Danzig and the rest of the crew are just good fishermen, and we mesh well as a team. We all know our individual roles on the boat and what we need to do. I'm not an overbearing boss by any means, but I look at myself as the quarterback and make sure everyone can do what they need to do to be successful.



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Marine 2015

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SAILFISH

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GUATEMALA
MIXED BAG

Pacific sails are plentiful, but keep your eye out for blue marlin in the spread.

LOS SUEÑOS
SAILFISH

Calm seas and double-digit days are common at this Costa Rican hot spot.

NORTH AMERICA

PALM BEACH
SAILFISH

Pitch-bait or kite-fish during the migration of sails into South Florida.

LA GUAIRA
SAILFISH, BLUE MARLIN

Concentrations of fish are still present off Venezuela, an area mostly untouched in recent years.

AFRICA

PIÑAS BAY
BLACK MARLIN

Panama's prime black marlin season also offers the possibility of a slam.

SOUTH AMERICA

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WHERE

DECEMBER/JANUARY Nor'easters in the Atlantic generate the ever-anticipated winds driving sailfish to South Florida and the Yucatan. At the same time, things heat up in other locations, and as Capt. Chris Sheeder, from Casa Vieja Lodge in Guatemala, puts it, "December and January are ruled by Central America." Whether you want to fish a familiar location or shoot across the world to a new hot spot, our panel of *Marlin* experts tells you where you need to be.



BY ANDREW COX

62ND SAN JUAN INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH TOURNAMENT

Peje releases seven blues to take top honors at Club Nautico

SEPT. 24-30, SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

When the diesel smoke cleared, the 50-boat fleet of 50-plus-footers released 79 blue marlin at Club Nautico de San Juan's 62nd International Billfish Tournament. An impressive number, considering all teams were fishing on 30-pound tackle in the tournament for the first time after Club Nautico's decision to move from a 50-pound-tackle tournament to a 30-pound one, increasing the challenge and excitement for anglers. Ricky Jaen, director of the event, was excited with the outcome and said, "We produced results using 30-pound-test line. We showed that we can — and we are going to — become the premier world-class

The 50 teams competing at Club Nautico de San Juan released a total of 79 blue marlin.

light-tackle fishing event." The tournament attracted 196 local and international big-game enthusiasts, including 10 lady anglers.

Anglers from six countries, as well as neighboring fishing clubs in Puerto Rico, competed fiercely across several categories for overall, international and interclub accolades. *Peje*, owned by Carlos García and whose name is translated as "fish," fulfilled its namesake by releasing seven blue marlin to take the top overall honors. The crews aboard *Reel Affair* and *Pez Piedra* each released four blue marlin for second and third place, respectively.

Caito Chapel aboard *Peje* won best local angler and best overall angler with three blue marlin releases, followed by *Reel Affair*'s Alberto "Tito" Serra and

TOURNAMENT QUICK BITES

BLUEWATER BABES FISH FOR A CURE

Oct. 2-3, Singer Island, Florida

It's more about the fun than the fishing at this all-women fishing tournament, which has raised more than \$300,000 for three local women's charities: Cancer Alliance of Help and Hope, HOW and the Kristin Hoke Breast Health Program.



COURTESY SAN JUAN INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH TOURNAMENT (TOP), COURTESY BLUEWATER BABES FISH FOR A CURE (4, RIGHT), COURTESY INTERNATIONAL LIGHT TACKLE TOURNAMENT ASSOCIATION (OPPOSITE)

Showtime's Edgardo Canales. Carey Chen was named the top international angler; Chen, John Moore and Andy Wilson represented the United States and took first place in the international team division.

75TH INTERNATIONAL LIGHT TACKLE TOURNAMENT ASSOCIATION

Team from Puerto Rico takes first place

SEPT. 13-19, MANTEO, NORTH CAROLINA




The team representing the Puerto Rico Light Tackle Anglers won the 75th ILTTA tournament.

The number: 196. That's how many white marlin were released during the 75th International Light Tackle Tournament Association tournament in Manteo, North Carolina. Twenty-two boats from Pirate's Cove Marina and the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, with 66 anglers fishing, also caught 13 sailfish and eight blue marlin during the four days of fishing. Anglers rotate boats and fish with different teams each day, creating a separate boat division within the tournament. In this division, *Dream Girl* took first place with 13 white marlin and three sailfish, *Point Runner* placed second with 13 whites and two sails, and *Goombay* finished in third place with 13 white marlin.

In the team category, the team representing the Puerto Rico Light Tackle

Anglers, Angel "Tito" Muntaner Sr., Angel Muntaner Jr. and Vincenzo DiAmico, released 17 white marlin and two sailfish to take first place. Jim Motsko, Wayne Six and Tim McGuire, from the Ocean City Light Tackle Club, took second place with two blue marlin, one sailfish and 14 whites; Carlos Monteros, Hugo Mayorga and

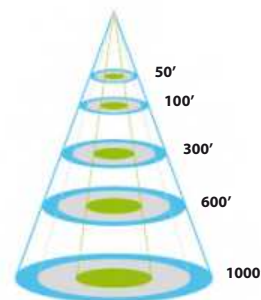
Gabriel Fernandez, from the Asociacion Nacional de Pesca, of Guatemala, finished in third, releasing 15 whites and a sailfish. Muntaner Sr. took first place in the angler division, followed by Motsko and Monteros. The 76th ILTTA tournament will take place in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and is scheduled for Oct. 10-16, 2016. 



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600 ft	160 ft	270 ft	440 ft
1000 ft	260 ft	440 ft	730 ft



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CALIFORNIA'S SECOND-LARGEST BLUE MARLIN

*Anglers experience monumental year
off Southern California*

Matt Santora and Andy Vo set out for the fishing grounds off San Diego, California, on Sept. 23 without expectation. However, a push of warm water from El Niño over several months had created a steady billfish bite in the area. Perhaps they'd see a fish or two. But when a behemoth blue marlin engulfed the lure behind *Finbomb*, a 21-foot center-console, and the two-speed Shimano Talica 25 loaded with 100-pound braid began screaming, they knew they had something special. For two hours, Santora fought the fish stand-up before the duo leadered the fish. Weighed at the Marlin Club of San Diego, their blue marlin tipped the scales at 662.2 pounds, becoming the second largest ever recorded in California. The heaviest? A 692-pounder landed in 1931. 🐟



*Matt Santora (left) and Andy Vo weighed their
662.2-pound blue marlin at the iconic Marlin
Club of San Diego.*

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W W W . H U K G E A R . C O M





The Billfish Conservation Act will prohibit billfish importation if the law is implemented as intended.

BY JASON SCHRATWIESER, CONSERVATION DIRECTOR, IGFA

A WAITING GAME FOR THE BILLFISH CONSERVATION ACT

Three years later, still empty-handed

It's hard to believe, but it's been more than three years since President Barack Obama signed the Billfish Conservation Act (BCA) into law on Oct. 5, 2012. This historic piece of legislation banned the importation of billfish into the continental United States and also provided the means to take away the United States' dubious distinction of being the world's largest importer of billfish. This effort took nearly four years of blood, sweat and tears for IGFA and our partner Wild Oceans to accomplish, but we are now left with a federal law that governs billfish importation.

Since its passing, the BCA has been the responsibility of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), whose task is to develop and implement the law; one would think this task should be easy because the entire law is only two pages long. The BCA's language is straightforward in that it strictly prohibits the

importation and sale of billfish in the continental United States but still allows traditional harvest and sale within the Hawaiian Islands and Pacific territories.

What NMFS is trying to figure out, ever so slowly, is if the BCA legally allows billfish harvested in Hawaii to be shipped to the mainland United States. We say that it does not, for two main reasons:

1. Prohibiting importation from foreign countries but allowing Hawaii to ship billfish to the mainland most likely violates international trade treaties.

2. The BCA's authors wrote and passed this important law to conserve billfish — not to supplant a sizable foreign billfish market with a domestic one.

Additionally, allowing Hawaii to ship billfish to the mainland necessitates NMFS to develop an effective and enforceable mechanism for differentiating between foreign- and

domestic-caught billfish. Doing so would create substantially more work for NMFS.

For the better part of a year and a half, NMFS has promised a draft rule. However, we've yet to see one. Hopefully, by the time this issue of *Marlin* reaches your house, one will exist. If indeed this early Christmas present occurs, we hope it reflects what the BCA's authors intended. That is, no billfish — foreign or domestic — is to be sold in the continental United States, period.

THE IGMR COMPLETES YEAR WITH NEW RECORD

Ten successful satellite tagging events in seven countries

BY LEAH BAUMWELL, CONSERVATION COORDINATOR, IGFA

The 2014-2015 IGFA Great Marlin Race (IGMR) was the largest race to date, with a total of 63 satellite tags deployed in 10 tagging events. Combined, these fish swam a total linear distance of 57,085 nautical miles. However, one fish was responsible for 10 percent of the total distance.

On Oct. 28, 2014, during the Lizard Island IGMR in Australia, Mark Paterson satellite tagged an estimated 1,100-pound black marlin aboard *Kalira*. Exactly 180 days later, the tag popped up to reveal the fish swam an incredible 5,716 nautical miles across the Pacific Ocean, nearly reaching South America. Sponsored by Ernesto Bertarelli, the winning fish not only swam the longest distance in the IGFA Great Marlin Race but, to our knowledge, swam the longest linear distance ever recorded by a billfish with an electronic tag. 🐟

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+
FOUR BIG-
GAME GURUS
WEIGH IN ON
AN IMPORTANT
TOPIC

Q: WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISTAKE YOU SEE ANGLERS MAKE WHEN TRYING TO HOOK A BILLFISH, AND HOW WOULD YOU CORRECT IT?



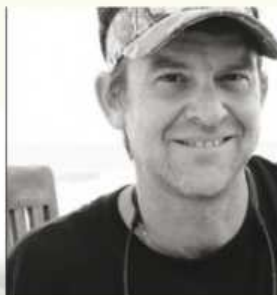
**CAPT. QUINTON
DIETERLE**
CUTTING EDGE
KEY BISCAJNE, FLORIDA

The biggest and most frequent mistake I see anglers make, whether fishing from the kite or on the troll, is reeling as hard as they can before coming tight. Everybody has heard the first lesson on dropping back: Feed the fish the bait for 10 seconds and then set the hook. Right? Do you ever hear to first reel tight? *No*. The easiest way to fix this common mistake is to instruct the anglers to drop-back until they feel the line increase in speed off the reel and then reel the handle until the line begins to go out, then set the hook. After a few attempts, the anglers usually get the hang of doing it and are more successful.



CAPT. BUBBA CARTER
TIJERETA
LOS SUEÑOS, COSTA RICA

The one big mistake I see 90 percent of my anglers make is they don't hold the rod all day. They think they're fast enough for the captain to call out where the fish is in the spread and have enough time to get to the rod and drop-back to the fish on time. This works about 50 percent of the time, but if you just hold the rod and watch your bait during the day, you're going to be 20 percent better than the other guy. Another thing I see anglers do is try to put their rod in the rod belt before the fish is actually hooked. That's just like taking your eye off the ball in baseball; you're not going to fare very well.



**CAPT. ANTHONY
MENDILLO**
KEEN M
ISLA MUJERES, MEXICO

One of the biggest mistakes we find while trolling for sailfish is what I call the blind dump. This is when an angler's rigger or flat line pops out of its clip and the angler is late to the bite. The angler then just dumps the reel into free-spool to *maybe* a fish but often nothing. This method works great once you know there is a fish back in the spread, but the mistake is made when you drop-back a head or a weed, or worse yet, you drop the bait right by the fish that was happy to bite to begin with. I always want my anglers to wind up the bait so I can see what's going on. Is it a fish? *Do they even have a bait left?* If there is a fish and things are good, drop-back, dump, do whatever, but we need to know what they're dealing with so things are done on their terms when they do get the bite.



CAPT. CHRIS SHEEDER
RUM LINE
CASA VIEJA LODGE,
GUATEMALA

Above all, if you're not hooking billfish via bait-and-switch, you're missing out on the most exciting and interactive way to catch them. But stay calm! Most billfish that are going to bite aren't going anywhere, so take your time and be precise with what you're doing. Stop shouting 100 words per second, and *listen*. Your captain has a better vantage point and might have some advice to help hook the fish. A well-positioned bait is usually much better than just getting it out quickly. Waiting for the right bite, instead of rushing a bad bite, saves bill wraps and lost fish. A calm and collected angler can easily time an aggressive bite with a controlled drop-back. The more you practice staying calm, the more everything will seem in slow motion. Once the billfish is on, you can go as crazy as you want, but staying cool beforehand will make you shine as an angler.

+
HAVE A QUESTION?



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BY JACK VITEK, WORLD RECORDS COORDINATOR, IGFA

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Marlene Vallarino's 8-pound-line-class world record still stands today

WOMEN'S PACIFIC SAILFISH RECORD

This month marks the 30-year anniversary of Marlene Vallarino's impressive 8-pound-line-class world record for Pacific sailfish. On Dec. 14, 1985, Vallarino was fishing out of Panama's famous Tropic Star Lodge aboard *Australia* with Capt. Dave Rose when a 130-pound sailfish crushed the bonito strip bait she was trolling. After a one-hour fight, the fish was landed, and the catch has remained the women's 8-pound-line-class record ever since.



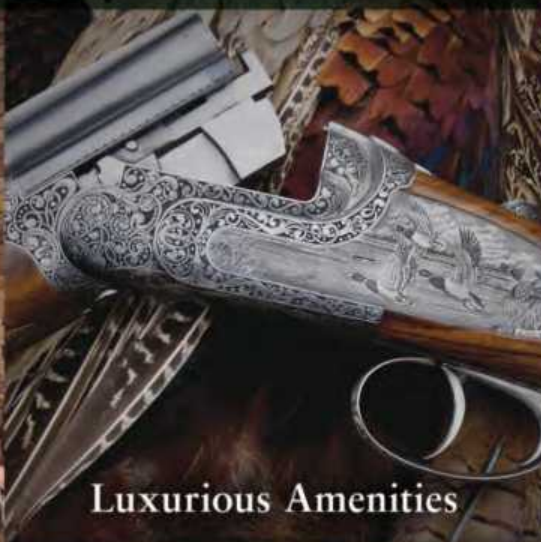
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CRIMP

Crimping the leader tight to the eye of the hook is considered a happy medium between a loop knot and a snell. Some white marlin fishermen in the mid-Atlantic like this method best, and it is a good option for those not comfortable tying loop knots or snelling a hook.

POSITIVES: The crimped connection keeps the hook from burying into the bait and still allows the hook to move on the loop when coming tight. A crimp is the easiest and most consistent way for a true connection without worrying about a pulled knot. It is also less time consuming when building multiple rigs.

NEGATIVES: The circle hook can move and get stuck at an awkward angle, resulting in the hook catching itself on the leader and preventing it from ever finding its mark. Matching the correct crimp to the diameter of leader is pertinent; not using the right crimp and crimping tool or overcrimping the connection could sacrifice leader strength.

If the connection is too tight to the hook, the pressure of the jaw closing can flatten or pinch the monofilament and break the leader.



SNELL

The most common connection in the

Pacific for pitch baits and trolled baits, the snelled connection is also becoming more popular with kite-fishermen and live-baiters, especially when targeting sailfish with larger baits.

POSITIVES: The snell eliminates the hook from swinging on the leader and reduces the chance of the hook turning and burying itself in the bait. In the bait-and-switch fishery, statistics show a significant increase in catch ratio over a looped connection when using pitch baits because the perpendicular force against the shank of the hook causes the hook to penetrate deeper and engage at different line angles.

NEGATIVES: Snelled hooks often increase the number of lost meat fish with teeth because the leader is connected to the shank and not the eye of the hook.



LOOP KNOT

The type of knot varies, but the perfection loop, surgeons loop and uni knot are all common choices. A loop knot allows the hook to move freely on the leader, and this connection is most commonly used for live-bait fishing.

POSITIVES: When kite-fishing, the loop allows fragile baits, such as pilchards and herring, to change direction and swim in a more natural manner, extending the life of the bait and encouraging the bait to swim in tighter circles under the kite. The loop also allows the hook to easily find the corner of a predator's jaw when an angler engages the drag. A loop-knot connection can also reduce the number of lost fish with teeth, such as wahoo and kingfish, because the leader is connected to the eye of the hook rather than the shank.

NEGATIVES: If the loop is too large, the hook can swing back against the bait and bury itself, causing the hook to become ineffective and lead to pulled hooks. The connection might also cause the hook to penetrate the predator from the outside in, rather than inside out.

THE GREAT DEBATE

CIRCLE HOOK CONNECTIONS

BY ANTHONY DIGIULIAN

Catch ratios for billfish have soared as crews and anglers fine-tune their circle hook skills and techniques. It is now common for anglers to catch 80 to 90 percent of their bites, and how the hook is attached to the leader plays a critical role. There are three common ways to attach a leader to a circle hook, and choosing a method often depends on personal preference, with positives and negatives to each.



ABOUT THE EXPERT: A professional in the sport-fishing industry for more than 30 years, Anthony "Tony" DiGiulian fishes competitively on the tournament circuit and co-founded the IGFA School of Sportfishing.

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WILL DROST (LEFT), © MARTIN STRMISKA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (CENTER),
SCOTT KERRIGAN / AQUAPAPARAZZI.COM (RIGHT)



P A S S T H

FIVE TOP FAMILY-FRIENDLY



BY SAM WHITE

E T O R C H

BILLFISH DESTINATIONS



TOP-SHELF BILLFISH DESTINATIONS USUALLY FALL INTO TWO CATEGORIES. THE FIRST OFFERS TERRIFIC FISHING BUT NOT MUCH ELSE TO DO — IT’S THE “EAT, SLEEP, FISH, REPEAT” ROUTINE. BUT WHAT IF YOU COULD SHARE THAT PASSION OF CHASING MARLIN AND SAILFISH WITH YOUR SPOUSE AND KIDS?

With that in mind, we set out to find the top five family-friendly billfish destinations. They’re rated subjectively, with five stars being the best or most favorable and one star the least favorable based on the following categories: ease of travel, general expense, quality and range of lodging and dining options, charter options and weather. So schedule that week of vacation and pack up the family; we’re hitting the road in search of the best family-friendly fishing adventures.

Kona, Hawaii

Ah, Kona. Starting with the weather, this Big Island destination has a lot going for it, with almost always postcard-perfect weather 12 months out of the year. The fleet fishes within the lee of the island, so the seas are generally flat, and the lines go in almost as soon as the boats leave the harbor — no long runs to the fishing grounds there. This combination makes it a perfect destination to introduce younger children to sport fishing.

Another added bonus is the relatively low cost of charters, which are widely considered a good value for the money because most of the day is spent fishing and not running back and forth to distant fishing grounds. There are several top-notch boats

and captains available for about half of what you’d expect to pay in most other destinations, so it’s entirely possible to fish for a few days without maxing out the plastic. Kona is home to some of the top names in the sport: world-record holders, tournament winners, Billfish Foundation top-tagging captains and more. The charter list reads like a who’s who of sport fishing: Marlin Parker, Kevin Nakamaru, Neal Isaacs, Rob Ellyn, Kevin Hibbard, Teddy Hoogs and several dozen more are all seasoned professional skippers.

Kona is also one of the very few places in the world where you can take a half-day charter and have a reasonable chance of catching a marlin. Need to catch an afternoon flight home? Book a four-hour trip in the morning, and you might still be drying off the salt water on the way to the airport.

Most of the action centers on Honokohau Harbor, which is conveniently located between the Kona airport and the town of Kailua-Kona. It has a convenient booking desk to help with reservations, but as with most other destinations, the top boats will go quickly, so book early to make sure you get your top pick. Lodging options abound, and dining is just as easy.

Off the water, the options are limited only to your budget

FROM LEFT: DOUG PERRINE / JON WHITTLE / ISLANDS.COM,
DOUG PERRINE, SCOTT KERRIGAN / AQUAPARAZZI.COM (2)



WORLD-CLASS

boats and captains chase blue marlin and other pelagics in the nearby fishing grounds off Kona. But if fishing isn't on the day's schedule, hiking is a great alternative for a family adventure.

ST. THOMAS offers plenty of opportunities for blues fishing the iconic North Drop, and all the onshore activities one would expect of a Caribbean destination await for the family to enjoy.

and imagination. Feeling adventurous? Take a helicopter tour of the island, go for a hike or take the kids surfing. Ask your charter captain if whale-watching is available, or just hang out on the beach and watch the sun slowly set on the Pacific.

Now for the downside. Kona is a long way for most. There are some nonstop flights available, but expect some very long travel days on either end of the trip. Hawaii is an island in the middle of the Pacific, so everything

that's not grown there has to come in by air or sea; that usually means a higher price for groceries and meals. But there's no passport required, no hassles with customs and no issues with a foreign language.

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

A bit closer to home, especially for those of us on the East Coast, is the blue marlin hot spot of St. Thomas. It's located in the U.S. Virgin Islands, right in the heart of the Caribbean Sea. When you imagine an idyllic Caribbean island, with impossibly clear-blue waters, sugar-white-sand beaches and some of the most picturesque scenery imaginable, that's St. Thomas. And for decades, the North Drop

has attracted blue marlin in such numbers that the island has gained worldwide notoriety for excellent marlin fishing, especially around the full moons of July, August and September.

Charters are readily available, but you won't find dozens of gleaming sport-fishermen lined up and ready to go. As long as you do a little research ahead of time — and specify that you want to go marlin fishing — there are enough good choices to go around. The island's primary marina is American Yacht Harbor in Red Hook, a small community on the island's eastern coast. You can also check in with Stewart Loveland's Neptune Fishing Supplies (neptunefishingsupplies.com) in Red Hook for updates, information and fishing reports.

As a top tourism destination, St. Thomas' options for eating, drinking and sleeping are nearly limitless and are dependent upon only the budget. Most families choose from the quaint small hotels and island-style resorts along the coast, within walking distance to the beach. Snorkeling is a big nonfishing draw thanks to the crystalline water and amazing underwater life close to shore. Beginners will instantly become hooked, and experienced snorkelers will find this to be a memorable experience.

But with every benefit comes a drawback: The dark side of St. Thomas can be the weather. When the winds pick up, the North Drop can be pretty salty, and although there are days where it's beautiful, they're often



KONA, HAWAII

EASE OF TRAVEL: ★★
EXPENSE: ★★★
LODGING/DINING: ★★★
CHARTERS: ★★★★★
WEATHER: ★★★★★
CONTACT: Honokohau Harbor, honokohauharbor.com, 808-327-3685



ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

EASE OF TRAVEL: ★★★★★
EXPENSE: ★★★
LODGING/DINING: ★★★★★
CHARTERS: ★★★★★
WEATHER: ★★★
CONTACT: American Yacht Harbor, igy-americanyacht-harbor.com, 340-775-6454



FOR DECADES, THE NORTH DROP HAS ATTRACTED BLUE MARLIN IN SUCH NUMBERS THAT THE ISLAND HAS GAINED WORLDWIDE NOTORIETY.

FROM LEFT: RICHARD GIBSON (3), WILL DROST



BACKING DOWN

on marlin or catching small mahimahi can be a memorable time with the family when you choose a domestic location such as the Outer Banks in North Carolina. If you'd rather add stamps to the passport, Costa Rica offers several family-friendly destinations with calm seas and plenty to do on land.

outnumbered by the snotty ones. The good news is there's plenty to do back ashore if the family doesn't feel comfortable with the forecast on your scheduled fishing days.

The Outer Banks, North Carolina

It's one of the true birthplaces of American sport fishing: the northern Outer Banks of North Carolina. This string of barrier islands stretches from the Virginia border south along the Carolina coast. The bulk of the Outer Banks charters are based around Manteo at Oregon Inlet, with additional boats located down in Hatteras. If a marina full of 50- to 60-foot charter boats gets your pulse racing, then you'll be in heaven here. Between the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center and Pirate's Cove Marina there are scores of truly top-flight boats that fish offshore year-round, with some of the world's finest captains and crews. August and September highlight the peak white marlin bite, and blues are available at any time during summer and fall. Winter brings bluefin tuna if you're looking for a heavy-tackle pull.

Although the Outer Banks is a tourist destination, take a break from the mundane hotel room and look into renting a small beachfront cottage through a service like HomeAway or Airbnb. The rates often are reasonable, and this gives you the option of eating meals in rather than dining out every night. Charter rates average around \$1,900 for a full

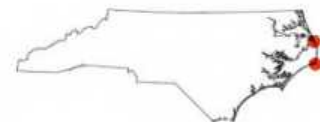
day in the Gulf Stream. Off days are great for hitting the beach and the surf, but don't miss the Wright brothers memorial at Kitty Hawk, where they made their historic first flight. There are the lighthouses at Hatteras, Bodie Island and Currituck to explore, and a day trip down to Ocracoke Island is also well worth it.

If there's a drawback to the Outer Banks, it's that it's tough to get there from just about anywhere. The closest international airport is in Norfolk, Virginia, which lies a few hours north of Manteo. Those on the East Coast can make the trip by car; coming up from the south, it's fun to take the big car ferry from Cedar Island to Ocracoke and then over to Hatteras Island. It's a scenic drive, and kids have a blast on the ferry crossings, so if you're looking for the ultimate family road trip, this one's a great choice.

Costa Rica

It's the first international destination on the list, and that means the family will need passports. But aside from that, you're just about guaranteed to have a great trip when you head for the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. There are reasons why this rainforest-meets-the-sea destination is so popular: great fishing, terrific lodging and off-the-charts sightseeing.

After arriving in the nation's capital city of San Jose, most visitors will head either for Los Sueños Resort Marina or the seaside community of Quepos, about 45 minutes south of Los Sueños. Los Sueños hosts one of the largest charter fleets in the nation, plus a variety of available condos in addition to a Marriott resort. Rent a golf cart and you'll never have to leave the resort; there's fishing, dining and



THE OUTER BANKS, NORTH CAROLINA

EASE OF TRAVEL: ★★★
EXPENSE: ★★
LODGING/DINING: ★★★
CHARTERS: ★★★★★
WEATHER: ★★★★★
CONTACT: Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, oregon-inlet.com; Pirate's Cove, fish piratescove.com



COSTA RICA

EASE OF TRAVEL: ★★★
EXPENSE: ★★★★★
LODGING/DINING: ★★★★★
CHARTERS: ★★★★★
WEATHER: ★★★★★
CONTACT: Los Sueños Resort Marina, lsrm.com; Marina Pez Vela, marinapezvela.com

drinking, shopping, sightseeing and even golf available right on property. Meanwhile, Quepos is the gateway to Manuel Antonio, one of the nation's best-loved nature parks. The guided rainforest tours are not to be missed, especially for any budding naturalists in the family, and the white-faced monkeys, colorful toucans and elusive sloths are kid favorites. Picturesque hotels and great local restaurants abound in the hills above Quepos as well.

Capt. John Mumford charts *Billfish* out of Marina Pez Vela in Quepos. A family man himself, he enjoys taking the young ones out for a day offshore as well as teaching new anglers. There are tons of other charter-fishing options throughout the country, ranging from proven tournament winners to inshore pangas

The Bahamas

Many a kid growing up on the East Coast had their first experience offshore fishing in the Bahamas. It's especially favored for those living in coastal Florida, where this nation of 300-plus islands is just a few hours away by boat. The fishing might not be quite as prolific as in some of the previous destinations, but for the most part, the Bahamas represents an easy destination to travel and fish for the family, especially if you're in your own boat and can do a little island hopping. Some charters are available, but it's best to work out those arrangements well in advance to ensure you're getting the right crew on the right boat because quality can vary wildly.

Throughout the Bahamas, snorkeling is a



THE BAHAMAS

EASE OF TRAVEL: ★★★★★

EXPENSE: ★★★

LODGING/DINING: ★★★

CHARTERS: ★★

WEATHER: ★★★★★

CONTACT: Treasure Cay

Resort, treasurecay.com;

Abaco Beach Resort and

Boat Harbour Marina, abaco

beachresort.com

targeting jacks and roosterfish in the surf. And when the bite's on, it's really on. Boats release anywhere from five to 30 sailfish on the better days, often with a marlin or two thrown in for good measure. For kids looking for action, this is the place.

Fuel prices are high in Costa Rica, so expect to pay \$1,800 to \$2,000 a day for offshore charters. The prime season for marlin and sailfish is from late November through April, and the hot, sunny, calm conditions make it a perfect getaway for those with a case of the winter blues in the States. In summer, the fishing gets good up to the north out of Marina Papagayo and Flamingo. For a taste of old-school Costa Rica sport fishing, head a few hours up the coast from Los Sueños to Carrillo. All are excellent family destinations, especially for those on their first trip out of the country.

SNORKELING in the crystalline waters of the Bahamas is a favorite nonfishing pastime, so grab the fins, mask and snorkel for a guaranteed good time. Ease of travel is an added bonus when traveling to the Bahamas, especially for those with their own boats. **THE FLORIDA KEYS** (above right) and Isla Mujeres, Mexico (opposite) are also great family-friendly destinations.

the resort's pool. With its ease of travel, high safety factor and good fishing, the Bahamas is more of an entry-level destination and a way to get everyone started down the path of the traveling angler. 🐟

nonfishing pastime and there's also great sightseeing in places such as Man-O-War Cay. And although the adults might head to Nipper's for its world-famous Sunday pig roast, the kids get more of a kick out of pizza night at Treasure Cay, an occasion that draws local families and tourists alike to the open patio by

FROM LEFT: SCOTT KERRIGAN / AQUAPAPARAZZI.COM, RICHARD GIBSON (2), SCOTT KERRIGAN / AQUAPAPARAZZI.COM (OPPOSITE)



HONORABLE MENTIONS

There are dozens more terrific family-friendly fishing destinations in the world; here are three that didn't quite make the cut.

ISLA MUJERES, MEXICO

Great sailfishing in wintertime, with excellent charter crews, many of which are U.S. boats there for the season. The island is very safe, but the weather can be quite rough offshore.

OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND

Crabcakes and billfishing. Ocean City has a lot to offer the visiting family, starting with the historic mile-long boardwalk along the beach. The white marlin fishing is off the charts in late summer, but it can be a long run offshore.

THE FLORIDA KEYS

An island getaway with a U.S. address. Great fishing for sails in winter, plus all kinds of other action nearly year-round, from offshore to the backcountry. Some of the best fishing is out of Islamorada, Marathon and Key West.



ART GALLERY

THE BEST OFFSHORE-INSPIRED ART FOR 2016

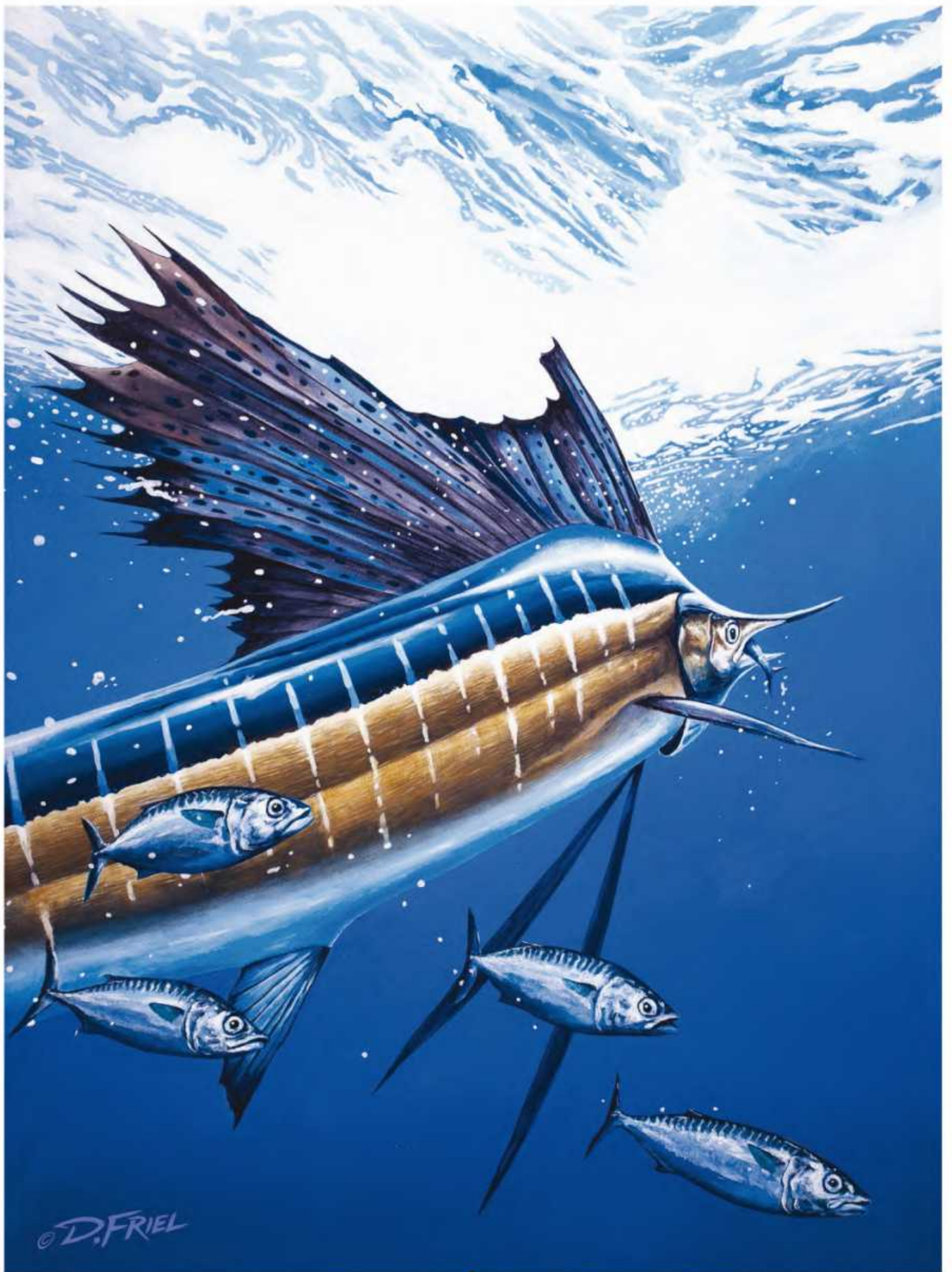
The ability to freeze the action of big-game fishing into a single moment might be an artist's most formidable challenge. Whether it's using acrylic or oil paint, pencil, wood or some creative use of swordfish bills, the compilation of art we put together this year will impress you. There's something here for everyone to enjoy, and we hope you get the same satisfaction it gave us putting it all together. Artist Johnny Widmer won this year's Audience Pick by our Facebook fans with his *Grouper Gulp*. You can view all the submissions online at marlinmag.com/artgallery.



DAVID WIRTH
War Bird Blue
 Florida Keys wild tamarind
 24" x 24"; Available
davidwirth.com

DON RAY
Gulf Sword
 Oil on linen
 18" x 24"; Original sold;
 proofs available
donrayart.com

DUSTIN COLE
Mahogany Pacific Sailfish
 Florida-grown
 Cuban mahogany
 96" x 36"; Sold
facebook.com/dustincoleart





DENNIS FRIEL
Victory
 Acrylic on wood
 18" x 24"
 Available
dennisfriel.com

STUART PETERMAN
Wall Marlin
 Stainless steel
 72" x 27" x 6"
 Available
stuartpeterman.com

RAY DOMINGO
Pelagic Pencil Study
 Pencil on watercolor
 paper; 42" x 28"
 Original and prints available
raydomingo@hotmail.com



DAN MATTHEWS
Super Slam
 India ink and 24-karat
 gold leaf on swordfish bills
 22" x 37"; Sold
matthewsart.net

RJ BOYLE
Turbulent
 Acrylic on canvas
 120" x 48"; Original sold;
 prints available
rjboylestudio.com

JASON MATHIAS
Blue Mirage
 Oil on canvas
 24"x 57"; Sold
jasonmathias.com









JOHNNY WIDMER

Grouper Gulp
Acrylic on canvas
16" x 20"; Available
johnnywidmer.com

MARK LLOYD

Rising Sword
Bronze on painted
swordfish bill; 36" x 6"
Made to order
vanmarkjewelry.com

AMBER M. MORAN

*2015 Emerald Coast
Blue Marlin Classic*
Watercolor and ink
16" x 20"; Available
ambermmoran.com

OLD - SCHOOL TACKLE BOX

CONTENTS

HAWAIIAN EYES
DAISY CHAINS
GREEN MACHINE
CEDAR PLUGS
DACRON

CLASSICS THAT STILL



SOME SAY
THINGS
GET BETTER
WITH AGE.
TACKLE
IS NO
EXCEPTION.

BELONG IN YOUR ARSENAL

BY HEATHER MAXWELL

JANUARY 2016

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MARLINMAG.COM



CLASSIC CEDAR:
IF YOU'RE
CATCHING
YELLOWFIN OR
BLACKFIN TUNA,
YOU'RE LIKELY
STILL PULLING
CEDAR PLUGS IN
THE SPREAD.



JERRY POMALES (LEFT), PAT FORD, RICHARD GIBSON (OPPOSITE TOP), SCOTT KERRIGAN /
AQUAPARAZZI.COM (OPPOSITE MIDDLE), RICHARD GIBSON (OPPOSITE, 2)

Before Billy Maxwell and I got married, I followed him from Virginia to Hatteras Island, North Carolina, in spring, after the Bonney brothers were kind enough to assign him a boat slip. At the time, Billy's first *Tuna Fever* was the old *Gannett*, built in 1974 by Ace Harris of Marshallberg, North Carolina. She had hosted President Jimmy Carter, and when her hull was stripped to bare wood, 11 white marlin bills were found embedded in the juniper.

But I believe that hull's biggest claim to fame came in the unlikely form of an angler from Maine who also spent his spring in Hatteras. Art LaPage fished on boat after boat in search of the captain who would give him a shot at a blue marlin. "We hooked that blue one on a mackerel on wire leader off the short rigger," says Billy. "Mr. LaPage released the fish and then bought the boat — lock, stock and barrel. I only pined for the rods."

LaPage bought that boat and everything on her, except for a Joe Yee original Super Plunger lure with a pearl head and mackerel skirt that I had purchased for Billy as a gift. At the time, it cost \$92, and I made sure that it was excluded from the sale. Today, there is one on eBay, no skirt, bid up to \$283, with five days left.

➤ OLD-SCHOOL TEASER

"Everything has changed so much with the circle hooks," says Capt. Barry Daniels, of *Skirt Chaser*. "We hardly ever drag anything old-school when we are marlin fishing. But I remember the old days fishing as a kid."

Daniels rattles off a laundry list of old lures for blue marlin fishing and reminisces about the Old Boss teaser that was a favorite on his father's charter boat, *Temptress*.

"You just can't compete if you don't use the double dredges, and all the baits are naked now because of the circle hooks," Daniels says. But he adds that his preferred pitch bait for a big blue marlin remains the same as in days gone by: a big Spanish mackerel, albeit

with a circle hook these days. He remembers the days of No. 19 wire leaders on 50Ws and ballyhoo with SeaWitch skirts. "We eventually changed from wire to 80-pound monofilament leader," Daniels says. "And then we dropped to 60-pound leader with the circle hooks. We don't worry about the chafe anymore because you hook them in the jaw. The lighter leader makes less resistance for the fish to feel, and using 20-pound-test makes less drag in free-spool."

➤ THE OLD STANDBY

Now, you might argue that the legendary Ilander lure — commonly known as the Hawaiian Eye — is not old-school, but I say that any lure that hit the water when I was in the fourth grade has got to be at least marginally oldish. And the whole point of this exercise is to highlight those tried-and-true baits that are called upon, even today, in a pinch.

Even though dredges are certainly now standard equipment, the old-school tackle box twist on the modern-day double- and triple-bar dredge is the tried-and-true Ilander Hawaiian Eye lure. "I'll use a regular Ilander with my mullets and the Juniors on a large ballyhoo dredge," says Daniels. "Blue and black or purple on the big ones and old-school blue and

white on the ballyhoo, and I do like a squid chain off the riggers — pink on one side and green on the other."

"That's one thing that hasn't changed around here since 1974," says Billy McCaskill, of Whalebone Tackle in North Carolina. "Except there are more choices now." McCaskill explains that even though there are so many different Hawaiian Eyes to choose from now — for years, the display was only 3 feet, and now it takes up nearly a whole wall — people buy only one: "The one they caught the fish on that day. To everyone, that's the only Hawaiian Eye that will catch!"

Whalebone is the kind of old shop that you love. The go-to place for locals and visitors alike, it is strategically located on the causeway right in between the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center and Pirate's Cove Marina. "They don't make the old Green Machine anymore, but there is a look-alike," McCaskill says. "And they sell. So do the cedar plugs and the squids for the chains." You gotta love a classic, and McCaskill certainly is one of those as well.

➤ IN THE TUNA BOX

"Heather, you are just not going to find what you are looking for — unless you go tuna fishing," Capt. Charles Haywood, of *Rigged*



PINK AND GREEN SQUID DAISY CHAINS ARE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEASERS FOR BILLFISH, BUT THEIR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS STARTED WITH CAPTAINS TARGETING TUNA.

STAPLES OF
BIG-GAME
TACKLE STILL
IN USE TODAY



THE GREEN MACHINE (ABOVE) AND STRIP BAITS (RIGHT) ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TACKLE STILL USED BY CAPTAINS TODAY AS TEASERS IN THE SPREAD AND DEADLY BAITS TO FILL THE BOX WITH MEAT.

Up, explains. "It's all new-school, and it's all still evolving. When I quit mating back in 1996, we were just starting to pull dredges on the downrigger. Now you need a \$3,500 electric reel just to pull them." The colors are new too, says Haywood. "It used to be no color, and now mine are rigged so that I can change my skirts out depending on the conditions. So it keeps evolving." Captains also special order their Hawaiian Eyes with colored heads and special skirts. Call it custom old school.

Haywood went on to revisit his old teasers, chains with a Hawaiian Eye on the back or an Old Boss or Mumford. Old school meant lots of action and lots of color. "When I mated with Tony Tillett on *Carolinian*, we caught three blue marlin in one day and saw them all to the same teaser: a red Voss with a red sparkly skirt and a red eye," says Haywood. "Tony always put a single-hook squid on the flat line, and we hooked all three on that.

"Today, we drag some Bart teasers and a Monster Breakfast," he continues. "That one is like a big bonito just cutting through the water." Haywood says if the charter boats could spend the whole season just looking for blue marlin, who knows what they would find? "We don't just try to catch big fish; we catch to fill the box. And it's never been done here, just riding around for blue marlin."

➤ **OLDER THAN DIRT**

"I always have cedar plugs around," says Haywood. "But my favorite is a green spreader

bar with a Green Machine on the end." That rig will save the day more times than not and also saves some money on bait. "When the tuna fishing is really good," he adds, "I drag a daisy-chain teaser, but I'll put a Green Machine on the end with a hook. If they pile on that, they get their feelings hurt!"

"I like a cedar plug when I'm blackfin tuna fishing," adds Daniels. "And SeaWitches for yellowfin." Daniels offers Capt. Bull Tolson's favorite black SeaWitch with a red head or red and white on the long shotgun with a blue head. Then he offers up Billy's favorite, which is crystal hair and a purple skirt — but he manages to get out of our interview without mentioning what he pulls in his spread.

➤ **WHEN WIRE WAS THE BOSS AND ONLY ONE GUY KNEW HOW TO RIG DACRON**

Every old Oregon Inlet story I've ever heard championed wire pulled on a 50-wide. Sounds like they dragged that rig for white ones and tuna and hooked their share of blue ones on the same. Many a captain has spliced an 80 onto a 50 in a desperate attempt to catch the one that usually got away.

"Seems like everything was a No. 9 wire on a No. 6 J hook way back then," says Capt. David Swain, of *High Return*. "We had a 9/0 or a 6/0 Penn to rig with wire. I remember one time I ran *Temptress* for Steve Daniels in a tournament, and he said only if we rigged with monofilament." That was a first for Swain.



JOHN UNKART (LEFT), SCOTT KERRIGAN / AQUAPARAZZI.COM, RICHARD GIBSON (OPPOSITE TOP), JERRY POMALES (OPPOSITE RIGHT)

PROS STILL USE DACRON AS BACKING ON REELS SPOOLED WITH MONOFILAMENT. IN SOME AREAS, SUCH AS AUSTRALIA, CREWS RIG BAIT STRAIGHT TO DACRON.



Today, almost every captain has a story about the last time a wire rig broke his heart. "I'll never use wire again," says Capt. Tom Krauss. "We hooked a grander in the Pirate's Cove Tournament, and the wire broke right at the transom," he laments. "Right there, where we could almost touch it."

"I always used a wire leader in Australia," says deckhand Steven Hall. "And I would rig a mackerel here on .040 and double-twisted wire for a swimming bait." Not many tuna charters get to spend the day with a mate who has chased big marlin all over the world, but *Tuna Fever* patrons do. Hall has grown up into a humble man with awesome stories who was finally ready to stay home after fishing the Canaries, Panama, the Azores — you name it.

"Now I will put out a cedar plug for blackfin and a Green Machine on a spreader bar for yellowfin," Hall explains. But, when asked about his lures, he simply states, "We just don't fish for blue marlin much." Capt. Dave Peck mentioned the Puerto Rican Prowler and a C&H Super Charger that have become his favorites in the spread, but Hall was quick to explain to me that lures depend on the sea conditions. "My favorite was the one that was getting bites." Well, yeah. "I like lures because you can use J hooks in them," adds Capt. Dickie Harris. "But you can't just throw one out while you are white marlin fishing anymore because we don't troll fast enough." It's just my guess, but maybe hundreds of dollars of chandeliers are slowing you down.

› THE FIRST BRAID

When Dacron hit the docks in Virginia

Beach, Virginia, it was Ray Temple on the 41-foot Viking *Pursuer* who people cajoled into sharing the secrets of rigging with the stuff. Temple and crew fished like professionals, and there wasn't a day on the ocean that wasn't a tournament for them. And there wasn't a new bit of tackle that didn't escape their scrutiny. "Today we still use Dacron, but a lot of mates like a hollow-core line," explains Hall. "With a high-test strength but a smaller diameter, the hollow-core products allow you to load the spool and then splice in your leader. You get much more line on the reel than with Dacron."

"But I figure if you've got a guy who can drive the boat, then you don't need that much line," Hall says. "I still like 50-pound Dacron as backing and mono for the leader, but we rig to the target species." Hall explains that they rigged their big baits on straight Dacron in Australia. With no stretch in the line, the hook set better. Pretty cool. The *Tuna Fever* crew also uses 200-pound Dacron backing to 400-pound mono main line on its green stick.

"What's this article called, anyway?" Hall says, and when I tell him, he asks me if I'm including belly strips. "What's that?" I say, and I get a cool story of record fishing in Panama. The bait of choice: the strip bait. "The conditions have to be right, but they work great when the fish are there," he explains. Today, strip baits are still an important part of the spread when big dolphin are on the move, and paramount to the success of bailing when the boat is backing into schools. It just goes to show that tried-and-true fishing techniques do evolve as well. 🐟



LOTS OF COLOR:
OLD-SCHOOL
TACKLE MEANS
TONS OF ACTION
AND PLENTY OF
COLOR, WITH
FAVOR TOWARD
THOSE LURES
THAT GENERATED
THE MOST BITES.

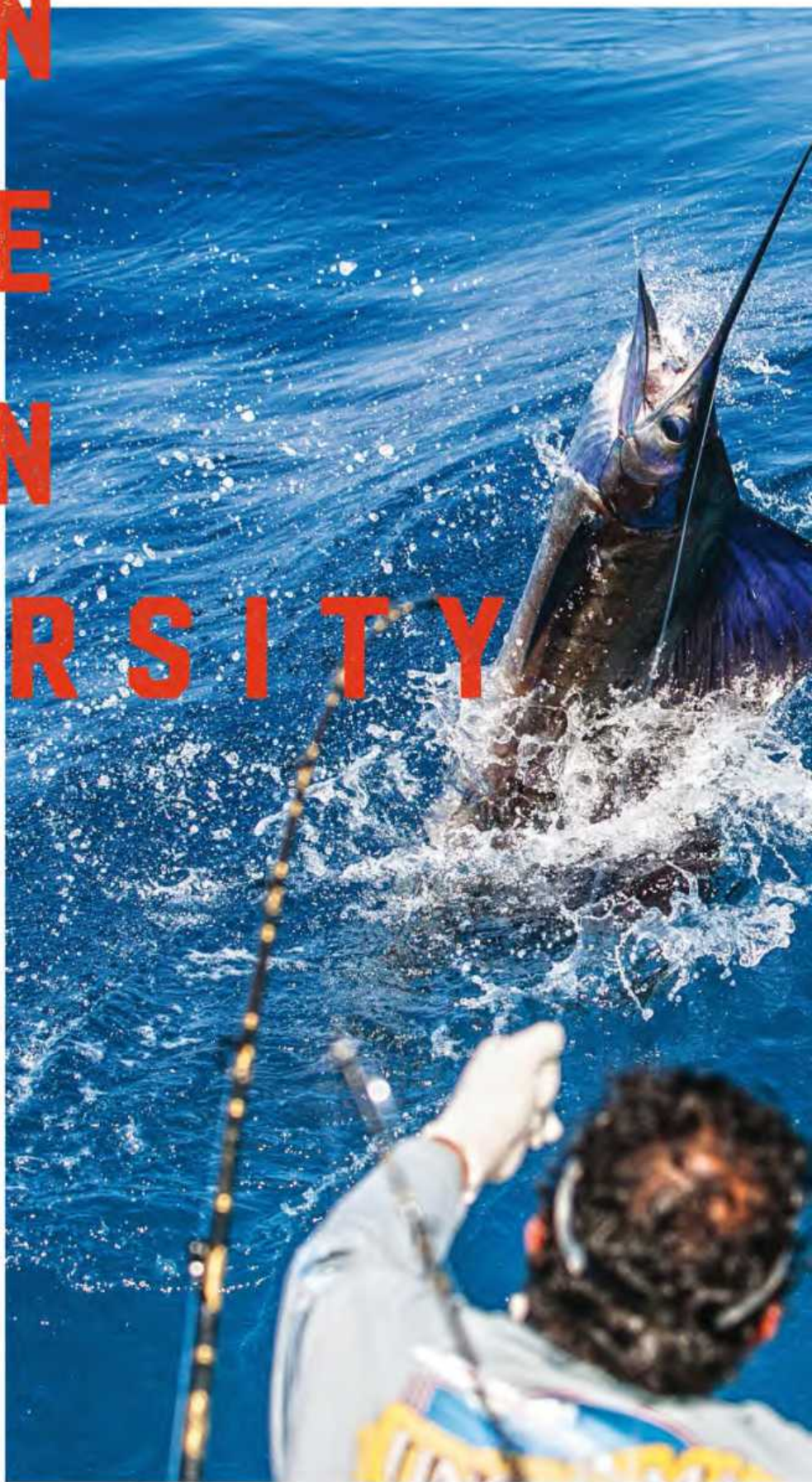
AN EYE ON DIVERSITY

EVERY MARLIN
UNIVERSITY
SESSION
BRINGS A
DIFFERENT
VIBE

BY DAVE FERRELL

Every Marlin University is a true learning experience; our students ask a lot of questions over the course of an event, and that's how we like it. The more you ask, the more you will learn. But in the midst of all the technical questions we hear, one of the most common among all of our students is "How do you decide where to put on a Marlin U?" It's a good question, and the answer is a bit more complicated than one would think.

Back when we first started Marlin U,



I decided its main goal would be to visit the places with the best billfish bites and hit them at the peak of their respective seasons so we could provide as many bites as possible for our guests. If we don't get bites, how can we teach you how to fish? It's still a good rule, and we try to stick to it to this very day. There are, however, a host of other factors that play into the equation as well, and although they can all disappear when the bite is hot, these same elements loom large when the fish refuse to cooperate.

WHEN A GOOD BITE DOESN'T CUT IT

One of our main stops for the first several years of Marlin U nearly 15 years ago was Venezuela. It was the perfect spot to hold

Unfortunately, Venezuela suffered a setback after a week of heavy rain caused massive mudslides along the Venezuelan coast in December 1999, and the area never fully recovered. A change in Venezuelan politics with the election of socialist Hugo Chavez dragged the country into despair, and now it's no longer considered safe to visit. But you can bet the fish are still out there, and Venezuela will probably be one of the first places we put back on the schedule if it ever settles back down and allows us to put on a safe, comfortable trip.

THERE ARE A VARIETY OF FACTORS THAT GO INTO CHOOSING WHAT PLACES MARLIN UNIVERSITY VISITS EACH YEAR. WE NEED A STRONG, FAIRLY PREDICTABLE BITE, ACCESS TO GOOD BOATS AND CREWS, GREAT FOOD AND HOT SHOWERS. AN AIR-CONDITIONED ROOM TO HOLD OUR SEMINARS IS NICE, BUT WE WILL CERTAINLY MAKE DO WITHOUT TO CHASE DOWN GOOD ACTION – A FISHERMAN HAS TO KEEP HIS PRIORITIES IN ORDER, AFTER ALL!

One of our most popular destinations, Guatemala, wasn't one of my first choices for a Marlin U destination either. I visited Guatemala on one of my very first assignments for *Marlin* magazine around 1993 to cover an International Light Tackle Association tournament. At that time, there were no lodges operating in the area, and

we had to stay at the Hotel Martita, which was still undergoing construction at the time. Let's just say the facilities really weren't up to speed — at least not in the sense that you would charge people to go there. The fishing was some of the best I've ever experienced; I think we were raising 10 to 12 fish a day and catching six or seven, which was very slow by Guatemala standards even back then. Luckily, several lodges sprang up in Guatemala that began to offer first-class service, good food, and great boats and crews. Places such as the old Fins 'N Feathers lodge and today's Casa Vieja Lodge, where we do our sessions, provide a level of service that few can match. Nowadays, if you really want



a fishing school. There was great fishing during several different times of the year — blue marlin in spring, and whites, sails and blues in fall — and plenty of good charter boats to choose from, excellent food and great places to stay. Oh, and diesel fuel was 13 cents per gallon. It was fishing paradise, and during our last Marlin University there, Capt. Miguel Tirado caught 19 white marlin on his 31-foot Bertram *Pull the Hook*!



LOS SUEÑOS IN COSTA RICA IS ONE OF THE RARE SPOTS WHERE FIVE-STAR ACCOMMODATIONS PAIR UP WITH GREAT FISHING.

to learn how to pitch-bait a circle-hooked ballyhoo to a billfish, a weeklong trip to Guatemala during the peak of its season

will hone your skills better than five years of fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. Captains here also have great success with blue marlin when they have to swing out wide offshore, so during certain times in late spring and summer, you can get a good shot at a Pacific blue marlin as well.

BLUE MARLIN VERSUS SAILFISH

Although we might be prone to small fits of exaggeration from time to time, I try very hard to set realistic expectations for our guests when it comes to what — and how many — we are going to catch. Television shows and magazine articles usually tout the greatest numbers possible to catch your interest and get you to make a trip. Although those numbers are usually accurate, they also are usually atypical and at the best-ever end of the scale. Luckily, at most of the places we go, even their slow periods equal and exceed most of the best-ever billfish chances anglers have at home. Sometimes, but not always, even the best places in the world can get skunky for seemingly no reason at all. You can catch 35 out of 70 one day, and go six for 12 in the same spot the next.

Another thing that causes higher expectations with numbers is the difference between whites, blues and sails. Students see we had 20 sail bites a day in Costa Rica and expect the same sort of numbers on blue marlin in St. Thomas. We try very hard to explain that no matter where you fish, if you can get one blue marlin bite during the day you've had a good day. Let me assure you, if you spend enough time on the water, there will come a time when that one billfish bite in four days becomes a cherished moment during your trip.

NEW PLACES

Another factor that might sway us to choose a spot not known for a ton of bites is the size of the fish caught there. In big blue marlin hot spots like Bermuda and Madeira, you can easily fish for four days or more and not get a sniff, let alone a bite. But the one that does finally make an appearance in the spread is usually a beast.

As Marlin University embarks on its 15th year with a growing number of alumni, and because we can't keep taking them to the same great spots every year, we sometimes branch out to places off the beaten path to offer up a new experience. That's how we came to make our first trip to fish Australia's Great Barrier Reef, and it's also behind our new session in 2016

to hit the seamounts off Costa Rica. In case you haven't heard, for the last several years boats have made the long 100- to 120-mile trek out to a series of seamounts off the coast, finding ridiculous numbers of blue marlin. Several intrepid teams spent their time, effort and money to erect several fish aggregating devices on the seamounts and upped the numbers even higher.

Capt. Josh Temple was one of the pioneers of this fishery out of Los Sueños, and his blue marlin numbers in 2013 stagger the imagination. During one epic trip in July, his anglers and crew aboard the 60-foot Paul Spencer *Carol Libby* raised 115 blue marlin and released 68, including one day in which they caught 24. This set the unofficial record for the most blue marlin in a day and surpassed the previous benchmark of 20 at the time. See what I did right there? I quoted some of the best-ever numbers. Luckily, Temple wasn't the only one seeing this many fish, and it wasn't long before word got out on the locations of some of these FADs and seamounts, allowing others to see and experience the same kind of action.

Capt. Randy Baker, one of our Marlin U instructors, made a trip out to the seamounts last summer and found a floating log covered in bait that his crew ended up staying with for over 100 miles. The natural FAD must have drawn every blue marlin in the area, and the crew drifted with the log, nicknamed Wilson, for six days. Baker and crew caught four doubleheaders the first day, finishing 18 for 27, one for one on striped marlin and one for one on sailfish, completing the slam. The following days, the crew went 20 for 26, 23 for 30, eight for 10, four for eight and six for eight on blues. In addition to an impressive trip for the entire team, on July 11, Baker became the only person ever to catch 20 blue marlin in a single day in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. After hearing this story, you can say it was a pretty easy decision for us to head there in 2016. We hope you can join us for a four-day trip out to the seamounts in July and August, or any of our great destinations that fit your schedule — you'll be glad you did! 🐟

DAVE FERRELL

**2016 MARLIN
UNIVERSITY
SCHEDULE**

FEB. 17-22 LOS SUEÑOS, COSTA RICA / **APRIL 21-26** IZTAPA, GUATEMALA / **MAY 19-24** CAP CANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC / **NOV. 8-12** AUSTRALIA GREAT BARRIER REEF / **JULY 29-AUG. 2** COSTA RICA SEAMOUNTS



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GIFT GUIDE

Forget the gift cards or worrying about correct sizes! This year's Holiday Gift Guide features a wide variety of products those on the receiving end of your generosity are guaranteed to love. And if you're the one building a wish list, there's something here for you too. From some of the finer things in life to a new variation on traditional Lowcountry cooking methods to cutting-edge technology found in today's high-flying drones, you are sure to find the gift (or gifts) that will put a smile on the face of someone special, even if that person is yourself.

TEXT BY ANDREW COX
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ZACH STOVALL



TRUST THE LOCALS

Wood-fired oyster roasting is an age-old South Carolina tradition for bringing out the best natural flavors. Bull's Bay Oyster Roasters just perfected it, so you can enjoy wood-fired oysters too. bullsbayoysterroasts.com



HEAD TURNER

Hatch's limited edition Big Game Bluewater fly reel by Lance Boen is a work of art with the stopping power you need. hatchoutdoors.com



STOCKING STUFFERS

Ditch the plastic water bottles for Costa's Kick Plastic stainless steel bottle and T-shirts made from recycled plastic (costadelmar.com). Yeti's Rambler Lowball (yeticoolers.com) is a great option for your libations, both hot and cold. For something custom, a personalized compass from Ritchie Navigation is a conversation starter (ritchienavigation.com).



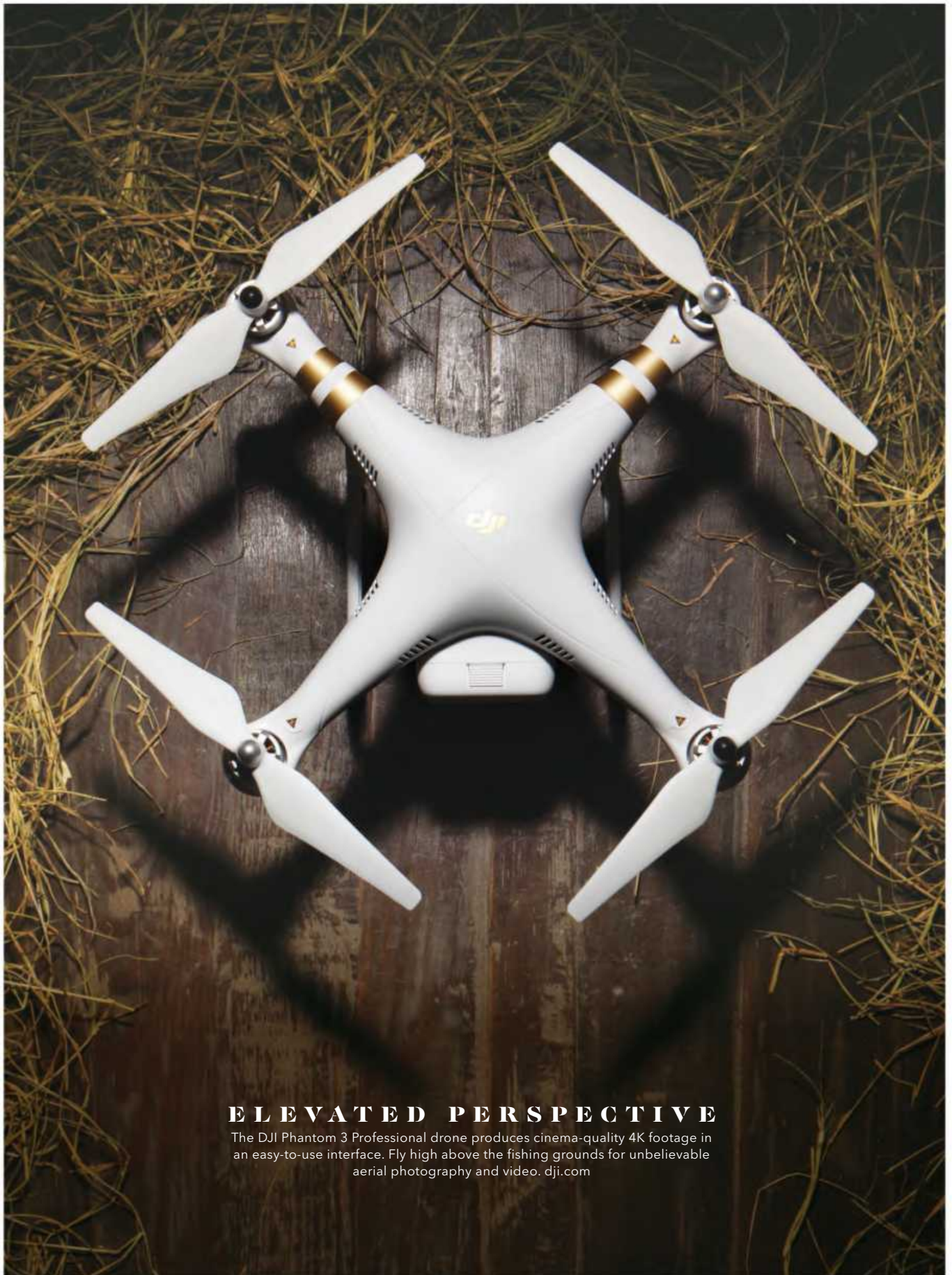
BUILD THE SPREAD

Grab an assortment of lures in a variety of colors from Fathom Offshore. Any fisherman worth his salt will never complain about some extra tackle, and the Mini Chugger, Fat Boy, Pepal Grande, Double O' and Calico will get the job done during the next trip offshore. fathomoffshore.com



EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

Take control of the cash and cards floating around your pocket with an M-Clip Sportsman Series money clip (m-clip.com), and prevent phone casualties and extend battery power while you're on the go with LifeProof's new Frê Power case (lifeproof.com). But don't venture far from home without your Guide's Choice shades from Smith (smithoptics.com).



ELEVATED PERSPECTIVE

The DJI Phantom 3 Professional drone produces cinema-quality 4K footage in an easy-to-use interface. Fly high above the fishing grounds for unbelievable aerial photography and video. dji.com

THE LARGEST YACHT SHOW IN MIAMI BEACH



NEW FOR 2016: ISLAND GARDENS MARINA



Island Garden Marina

Yacht Miami Beach, produced in cooperation by Show Management and the Florida Yacht Brokers Association, is expanding its footprint on Collins Avenue to accommodate more exhibitors as well as adding a gorgeous new location at Island Gardens Marina on Watson Island to accommodate deep draft vessels up to 500'. Island Gardens Marina, located on the MacArthur Causeway, will feature an impressive lineup of super yachts amidst the Miami skyline with entertainment, parking and transportation to and from the Collins Avenue show location.

HIGHLIGHTS OF YACHT MIAMI BEACH FOR 2016

- Expansion of Collins Avenue to the north with new exhibitors
- Island Gardens Marina, a deep water basin for superyachts and sailing vessels.
- Conveniently located in the heart of South Beach among the fantastic restaurants, hotels, and shops
- Plenty of beach hotel options through BoatShowHotels.com
- Restaurant concierge service
- On site music and entertainment
- New cocktail and dining experiences on the floating displays
- New parking location options
- Valet Service in multiple locations
- Free transportation between Collins Avenue and Island Gardens
- Free water taxi service to multiple points of the show
- Luxury restroom facilities
- Remains free to all attendees!

Run & Gun

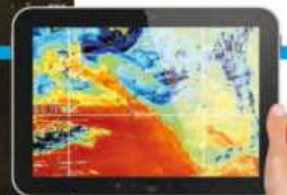
DECEMBER /
JANUARY 2016

+
SPENCER'S NEW
69-FOOTER,
INAPPROPRIATE, HAS
THE SLEEK LINES ONE
WOULD EXPECT OF A
CAROLINA CUSTOM.

P/68

ELECTRONICS

Increase your odds of finding billfish as *Marlin* reveals the secrets hidden within satellite imagery for sea-surface temperature, altimetry and other key factors to consider offshore.



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— GARY CAPUTI

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A quick and nimble sport-fishing machine



TRACKING TROPHIES FROM THE SKY

Satellite imagery can minimize risks and save a ton of time, but if you go with just a single sea-surface-temperature printout in hand, you probably will be disappointed

BY RANDY VANCE

Mitch Roffer, of Roffer's Ocean Fishing Forecasting Service (ROFFS), is an oceanographer and is in the business

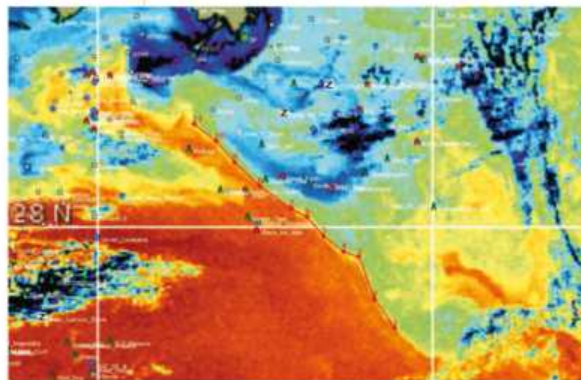
of interpreting satellite-derived data to make tournament-winning fishing plans for his subscribing customers (roffs.com). Sure, free sea-surface-temperature (SST) charts are available online from Rutgers University, NOAA or NASA, but fishermen often don't dive deep enough into them to make a difference.

Roffer says that you first need to be sure the temperature break is in the right range for billfish — the sweet spot being 75 to 78 degrees. Then, you need to know how long the break has been there.

"A break doesn't do much for 24 hours," Roffer says. "It reaches its optimum in about three days. Then, you and I could catch them in a rowboat."

App-based services such as Hilton's let anglers pack their tablets with satellite imagery and plan a course of action for success offshore (below).

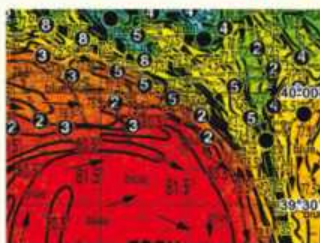
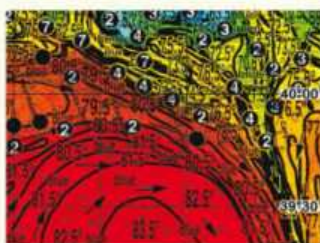
In five or six days, the cycle fades, likely from predator and angler pressure, and it takes a few days to recharge.



TOM SPENCER (TOP), COURTESY HILTONSOFFSHORE.COM (BOTTOM), COURTESY ROFFS.COM (OPPOSITE, 3)

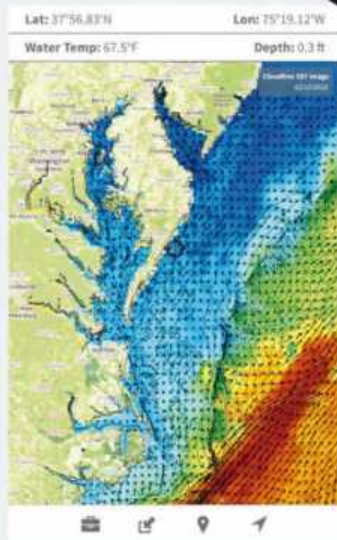
EDDY INTEL

While some services offer do-it-yourself tools to create your own fishing analysis, Roffer's Ocean Fishing Forecasting Service analyzes all sea-surface data to create a fishing plan tailored to a specific region, day and the preferred tactics of the angler. In this series, ROFFS has identified the convergence of two bluewater eddies and identified them as prime fishing waters. By referring to two or three consecutive sea-surface images, ROFFS gives anglers an up-to-date plan, but with the power to amend it based on dynamic changing conditions.



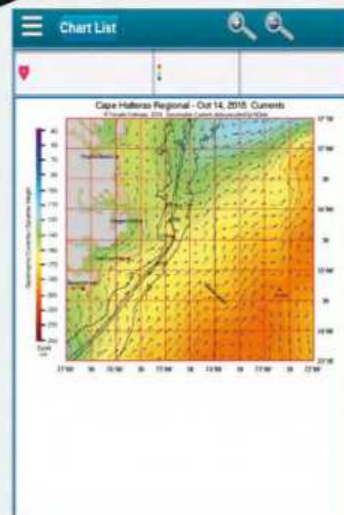
A good temperature break is one ace in your poker hand. When it meets good bottom structure, good currents and a water-color break, Tom Hilton believes a fisherman is playing a hand with four aces.

MORE DIY OPTIONS



FISHTRACK

Subscribe to the FishTrack app to view sea-surface temperatures, true water color, phytoplankton, currents, altimetry and bathymetry in the palm of your hand. Even better, when you download one screen to your toolbox, it downloads all those screens and allows you to overlay one or all of them, with or without cellular coverage.



TERRAFIN

TerraFin Satellite Imaging provides free sea-surface temperatures online or on your iOS or Android device. It provides current and historical charts so you can anticipate the movement of eddies and breaks. For an upcharge, view and overlay water color, phytoplankton and altimetry, and use TerraFin's route-planning tools for pre-trip strategy.

Tom Hilton offers his Realtime-Navigator online service (hiltonsoffshore.com), which not only provides satellite-imagery maps in an easily digestible form but allows anglers to plot their own fishing plan and download navigation charts into a tablet to be used offshore.

"Reading the charts is like a hand of cards; when you go out using just one image — say, a good temp break — it's like an ace in hand. But for a winning hand, you need to rely on other parameters like water color, current and altimetry. Every time you find another favorable condition on that spot, you have another great card in your hand," Hilton says.

To illustrate his point, Hilton charted a trip for the day I called.

"First, there's an eddy off the Gulf Loop Current. I like the temperature; that's two aces. I also found a color break along the eddy, which indicates phytoplankton. Now I have three aces. And the eddy hits the shelf, creating an upwelling right along the line of drilling rigs. That's four aces in my hand, and I plotted a fishing course right along the confluence of these points. That's where I'd fish if I were going."

Although these guys can spoon-feed it to you, with practice, you can get the hang of looking for good temperature breaks and color changes in eddies along shelves, seamounts or oil rigs and be your own man of the hour. But who's got the time? 🎣



PROPELLER BASICS

The essentials for getting your desired performance

BY KARL ANDERSON

No matter what you read or hear, there is still a fair bit of pseudoscience in propeller selection. Chasing the correct combination of speed and smoothness generated from a propeller can be an expensive exercise, especially with imported wheels that can take months to obtain. However, knowing what not to do is probably the best way to determine a course of action when dialing in the right propellers for your boat.

Considering the similarities among planing-hull designs of sport-fishermen, historical displacement and horsepower information from comparable vessels is the best resource we have for selecting propellers today. Few boats would have a hard time getting close due to the lack of comparable specifications.

DETERMINING FACTORS

The length and beam of the vessel are two additional factors that need to be taken into consideration when fine tuning the best propeller for your boat. A boat that is aft-loaded with fuel and equipment and tends to run high in the bow will do better with a slightly different prop from a boat that runs a bit flatter with a more forward center of gravity.

Tunnels or pockets on the hull also affect how a boat runs by decreasing the shaft angle — a positive aspect for increasing efficiency. This is also where a lot of folks talk about the wetted surface area (WSA) argument: The water running across the hull creates extra drag and slows down the boat.

I've run enough boats of various sizes to know less WSA does not always make a boat faster. In many cases, it's just the

opposite. Beam, overall length, shaft angle and deadrise contribute to this as well. Many times, when you have two boats with the same power, same weight and only a couple of feet of difference in length, the longer boat is faster. I'm oversimplifying, and I'm sure some engineer somewhere is cringing, but I'll take him out in real-life conditions with gear on board and prove it almost every time.

GEAR CORRECTLY

Further determining the listed duty cycle and revolutions-per-minute limits of the engine for continuous versus intermittent duty and the manufacturer-stated shaft and brake horsepower are important when deciding on the correct propeller. Gear reduction also plays a big role in how well a boat performs: A deeper gear requires a larger-diameter wheel, which might not be easy to turn but does help with overall smoothness. However, the boat manufacturer should determine the correct gear reduction; poor hole shots and suboptimal top ends result when hulls are not geared correctly.

Shaft diameter also plays a role

Selecting the correct propellers for your boat is often an expensive endeavor, but fine tuning often increases smoothness, performance and efficiency.

in the gear you can use. Back in the day, a lot of shafts were rung off at the wheel after a repower because the increased horsepower caused too much torque. This could have been remedied by upsizing the running gear or reducing the gear ratio from, say, 1.5-to-1 to 1.75-to-1 or 2-to-1.

To get accurate data on propeller performance, you need to load the boat similar to how it will typically be used. At full throttle, the engines need to reach the upper end of the engine revolutions-per-minute range and load percentages, and then determine the midrange and cruising speeds for best range and efficiency.

PITCH AND DIAMETER

Once the gear ratio, horsepower and operating weight are determined, the wheel diameter and pitch can be selected. Choosing a four-, five- or, in some cases, seven-blade wheel will depend on how the boat reacts and the subsequent loads achieved on the engines. On *Brier Patch*, we started with a pair of five-blade



Marlin Series wheels by Michigan Wheel before trying a pair with seven blades. Surprisingly, the seven-blade propellers were even smoother, with no loss of performance in any area. The number of blades depends on the individual boat; similar boats might have different results.

It is always prudent to work with a top-rated propeller shop to fine tune the pitch and cup of any wheel. Shops need accurate

vessel information, and fudging numbers could adversely affect performance, efficiency and engine health. Getting the right propellers and maintaining them properly will keep you running smoothly and efficiently for many years to come. It all starts with selecting the right propeller, and you might need to try other sets until you get exactly the performance and feel you desire. 🌀



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SPENCER 69

A 96,000-pound sports car that runs on water and can fish

BY GARY CAPUTI

The yard was humming when I arrived to check out one of Spencer Yachts' newest launches. Daniel Spencer, vice president, told me his company had numerous boats under construction, with hulls being jig-built in the Manns Harbor facility across the sound from the Wanchese yard where they are crafted into beautiful, high-performance sport-fishing boats. It's no wonder they're busy. Spencers have been tearing up the tournament circuit, furthering the company's reputation for building seaworthy fish-raising machines with a modern Carolina look that turns heads at the dock and on the water. Case in point: *Inappropriate*, a 69-foot feast for the eyes, was tied up behind the yard's main sheds.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SPENCER YACHTS



This is a popular size for Spencer because it's big enough to travel anywhere your fishing exploits take you but fast and nimble enough to be a genuine threat in tournaments. This one was built with input from her master, North Carolina native Daniel "Backlash" Davis, one of the most experienced sport-fishing captains on the water today. He had concerns that stem from the fact that the vessel will be making trips to the Pacific and back.

"I went all Caterpillar," Davis says. "Engines, generators, even engine controls, because if something requires service or parts, there are Cat distributors almost everywhere, and it's one-stop shopping. If I had another brand of generators and controls, tracking down service providers could become a nightmare outside the United States."

ENGINE ROOM

The heart of *Inappropriate* is her engine room. It houses the twin C32 ACERT diesels paired to ZF transmissions and a matching set of Cat C2.2 21.5 kw generators. There's plenty of room to access the engines, Racor filters, priming pumps and all the support systems housed there. There's a Dometic Spot Zero water-polishing system, a backup transfer pump to move fuel from the center storage tank to the outboard feeder tanks, a Stingray raw-water pump for the transom

livewell, a desalinization unit, a Dometic ice maker and a Mach5 freshwater pump that draws from two 200-gallon freshwater tanks.

SALON AND GALLEY

As you enter from the mezzanine through the J.R. Beers electric door, there is a cabinet with the power-transfer controls and starter for the gensets, so you don't have to tramp through the salon with wet feet to get under way. The salon is done in earth tones, with a carpeted living area and a large, U-shaped Van Brunt couch to port with storage beneath and in the armrests. A matching love seat faces the couch, with more hidden storage space. The galley is done in teak, with granite countertops, and features Amtico faux teak and holly flooring for durability. A four-person dinette is



to starboard, opposite the galley, with a large flat-screen TV behind it. The galley is fitted with a two-burner stove, microwave, pull-out Keurig coffee maker, pull-out cabinets and four 30-inch Sub-Zero drawers.

SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS

The four-stateroom design was laid out per customer order, with an aft master on the port side at the foot of the stairs to the companionway. It includes a full-size bed, cedar-lined hanging closet, full head with shower, freshwater flush toilet, vanity and sink with



SPECS

LOA: 69'	BEAM: 18' 6"	DRAFT: 5' 4"	DISP: 96,000 LB.	FUEL: 2,000 GAL.	WATER: 400 GAL.	POWER: TWIN 1,925 HP CATERPILLAR C32 ACERT DIESELS
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In the bow is the VIP suite, which features an oversize pedestal bed that stretches the full width of the hull with rod storage beneath it. Amenities include two hanging lockers, two long cabinets, a Bomar hatch with privacy shades, a full head with shower and additional cabinets for clothing.

a waterfall-style faucet. Opposite is the captain's quarters, with a large lower bunk and a smaller top bunk. Access to the Seakeeper 9 gyro is made easy by simply lifting the base of the lower bunk. Just forward is a head and shower, with entry from the companionway and the captain's quarters. A second bunk room, dubbed the crew quarters, is forward a cabinet for the washer and dryer.

COCKPIT

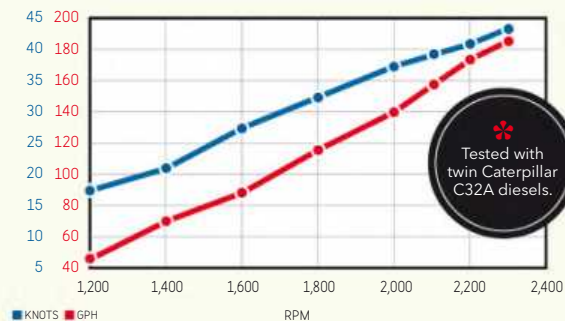
The cockpit boasts a teak deck and step up to a wide mezzanine couch with air-conditioning vents through a gap in the back cushions to keep you cool. Underneath is a large freezer box and a two-level ice chest. Also in the mezzanine deck is a storage compartment, an engine-room access hatch, a drink box and a slick bait

box, with custom trays aft of a large storage cabinet with a grill on top. All of the refrigerated boxes can be switched from freezer to fridge at the touch of a control panel just inside the engine-room hatch.

FLYBRIDGE

My favorite part of the boat incorporates a modern center-console design

with two forward-facing lounge chairs. They are high enough to see everything around you and low enough that the captain's view is not impeded when in use. Guest seating is all molded in, with four cozy chairs that hug you in rough seas, and there are hatches everywhere to accommodate all manner of small to midsize items that you need when traveling but





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never seem to have a place for. The hardtop height is low but ample, and the helm command center features three large Garmin LCD screens and controls. The teak helm pod supports the stainless steel wheel and single-lever controls. Overhead is access to an old-school teaser reel set up to Davis' specifications, with two Precision Auto electric reels built around a pair of Penn Senator reels. "When something breaks on one of these, I can get parts at any Penn reel dealer in the world," Davis says. "And they can skip a daisy chain away from a blue marlin faster than any other system on the water." The helm chairs and fighting chair are by Release Marine, and the beautiful tower from PipeWelders perfectly complements the sleek lines of the boat. Davis had a lot to do with the design of the tower helm station too. He wanted the wheel and controls offset to the starboard side so he can slip his arm through the legs of the top when it gets rough, and to have room for a second person to share the view.

PERFORMANCE

Unfortunately, Oregon Inlet was all but closed after recent storms, so we opted not to run aground trying to navigate it with the new boat and did some speed and handling runs on the sound. Having fished other Spencer boats of similar size, and knowing that the hull dynamics on this one were relatively unchanged from earlier builds, I am confident in saying that it will please the most



demanding captain under almost any sea conditions. Out on the sound, Davis throttled up, and the boat accelerated at a surprising rate, quickly racing to 37 knots at 2,000 rpm, burning 140 gallons per hour. There was a profusion of crab-pot buoys, and Davis began a series of quick-handling maneuvers to avoid them, with the boat responding in sports-car-like fashion to every input from the helm. Want more speed? You've got it. Pushed to full throttle, the big Spencer almost pins you to the seat on its way to 43 knots, ridiculously fast for a vessel of this size yet the hull handles it with ease. Davis reported the boat was as nimble in reverse as it was in forward, so chasing a hot blue marlin is almost ho-hum easy. The boat carves tight turns with ease, and the combination of speed and handling left a smile on my face. 🐟

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50' 2005 \$519,000 Steve 239.825.6174
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45' VIKING



45' OPN 2006 \$499,500 Eric 850.259.3172
45' CNV 2006 \$650,000 Kevin 850.259.1229

42' TIARA



42' 2007 \$429,000 Artie 850.259.7807
42' 2007 \$379,000 Pep 813.299.5884
42' 2005 \$409,000 Tony 941.527.1273

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57' DEAN JOHNSON CUSTOM CAROLINA 2007. Own the ultimate fishing machine. 3/2 layout with VIP fwd, Bosch American tower, Mezzanine seating, Eskimo ice maker, watermaker, custom livewell system, cherry interior, Sub Zero refrig/freezer. Powered by C-18 CATs which gives her a very economical cruising speed of 32 kts. Combine that with the classic Carolina ride and you have the perfect fishing machine!



102' DESTINY M/Y 2001. "Pushy" accommodates 10 guests in 5 large staterooms with an on deck master. Twin 2800 HP 12V400 M90 MTU's cruise 24 knots @ 1850 RPM, max 30 knots. \$400,000 refit at the Rybovich yacht yard in 2010 with new AV systems, interior soft goods, electronics upgrades, etc.



68' WEAVER BOATWORKS 2008. Beautiful custom sportfisher now offered for sale. 4 stateroom / 3 head layout with teak mezzanine. 2400 HP MTU M93 engines, easy 38 kt cruise! 48kt top end! One of the finest Weavers built. Highly customized interior. (2) 25 kw Northern Lights Generators.



64' CAISON YACHTS 2006. Economical with C32 @ 1650hp. New paint job by American Custom Yachts, new teak deck, new enclosure, new carpet, upgraded electronics, watermaker, icemaker, bottom work completed October 2014.



57' CUSTOM CAROLINA ISLAND BOAT WORKS 1996. Twin 1100 hp MAN D2842LE401 cruise 32 kt @1950 rpm, 36 kt @2100 and max 40 kts @2300 rpm. Three stateroom, 2 head layout. One of the best rides on the ocean. Interior redone in 2008. Bring all offers. Located in Annapolis, MD.



58' MONTEREY CUSTOM 1988. 2003 CAT C-18s, many recent updates: paint, SS shafts, power steering, transom fishbox, 96 mile touchscreen Furuno radar, 41 ft. Rupp Tournament Outriggers. Chance to own a classic. Great boat for the Pacific. Lots of recent upgrades. Owner wants to move up. Located in Florida.



50' VIKING 1998 w/ 10 cylinder man engines. State of the art, new Simrad electronics with JL audio system. New bridge curtains, fresh bottom paint. Just completed full detail on topsides and hull.



57' ISLAND BOATWORKS 2014. 2013 White Marlin Open Winner. Twin C32 Cats 1650hp w/3-year warranties. 41 kt cruise, 48 kt top speed. Multi-level cockpit mezzanine seating, Sat HDTV, bait freezer.



58' DAVIS BOATWORKS 1998. 3/3 layout boat with 750 original hours on CAT 3412's, twin generators, water maker, maple interior, Eskimo icemaker and more!



36' YELLOWFIN 2009. New Listing! Immaculate, with tower. Loaded with triple 2014 Mercury Verado 300 outboards with warranty. Brand new Raymarine electronics, 12KW HD Radar. Sea chest. Carbon fiber outriggers. Underwater lights.

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76' MARK WILLIS 2008

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75' WEAVER BOATWORKS 2015

MTU M-94 2400s w/ 85 hrs. provide an easy 35 kt cruise. Magnificent 4 SR layout w/ full beam master. A/C & tremendous custom refrigeration in mezzanine, 2 gyros, 2800 gallons of fuel for long range. Absolutely better than new! Ready to go anywhere now! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



74' SCARBOROUGH 2011

MTU M-93s, 2400 hp engines provide a 35 knot cruise. An absolute beast in a sea! Beautiful teak interior accented by gorgeous white onyx. It features a 4 SR layout with custom decor throughout. She shows new and is ready to go now. Very nice piece! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



74' TRIBUTE 2003. Repowered in 2012 with C-32As. Provides a 30 kt. cruise, holds 3300 gallons of fuel. Incredible 4 stateroom / 4 head layout. She's built to travel with redundant equipment and she shows very nice. Don't miss this one! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



72' TRIBUTE 2007. 4 stateroom / 3 head layout, plus a huge tackle room. Powered by Cat C-32As boasting a 35 kt cruise, burning 112 gph. She has a beautiful cherry wood interior accented by rich leathers and exotic marbles. She's ready to go anywhere. Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



65' BLACKWELL 2006. Caterpillar C-32-A's with warranties provide a 36 knot cruise, 2 Generators, and holds 2175 gallons of fuel. Three staterooms, full A/C on mezzanine. This is the nicest Blackwell ever built. She is ready to go! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



64' TITAN 2015. Powered by CAT C-32s allowing her to cruise at 35 kts. She carries 2200 gal fuel for long range capabilities. Featuring a beautiful 3 SR, 3 full head layout accented by lavish cherry wood interior. New condition and performs very well in a sea. A great opportunity to own a new boat without the wait! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



64' SUNNY BRIGGS 2001. C-30 Cats 1550hp, 2 Northern Lights generators. Featured a large salon with dinette and 3 oversized staterooms. She's had many updates and is ready to go. Fantastic sea boat. Located in Texas. Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



61' JIM SMITH 1988. 12 cylinder MANs provide 32 kt cruise @ 70gph. 3 stateroom / 3 head layout. Major updates in 2012 include mezzanine with custom refrigeration, new teak deck and covering boards, all new interior. Excellent condition! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



50' F&S 2012. Volvo IPS drive system provides 30kt cruise speed. Very good sea boat with a spectacular 2 stateroom interior layout! A prime example of what a custom boat should be. Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



46' TIDES CUSTOM 2016. Powered by twin 715hp QSM11s, 12kW generator. This is a one-of-a-kind custom convertible that offers all the amenities. Come in now and choose your colors of paint, your own interior preferences, and your tower selection. Make this "your" custom boat! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



45' SEAHUNTER 2015. Quad 350hp Yamahas w/ 300 hrs and warranty through 2020. 5kW Onan gen w/ separate diesel tank. (3) Garmin touchscreen, autopilot, FLIR night vision, Palm Beach Tower, flat screen TV, 770 gal fuel, Carbon Kevlar lamination technology. Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



44' RYBOVICH 1990. Twin 6V92 Turbos. Blue Printed. One of three 44' Exp. built by Rybovich. Always maintained to the highest standards by knowledgeable owners. Repainted, total interior refit at Rybovich, new teak deck & covering boards, new LED tower lights, running lights, interior accent lights. Truly turn-key! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



42' RYBOVICH (MARGARITAVICH) EXPRESS WALKAROUND 2004. Twin 660hp Cummins QSM11 Electronic (2000hr Inspection 2014). The perfect boat for fishing or cruising w/too many updates to mention. This vessel has been maintained by a professional captain and is lift kept. Must see! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.



42' INVINCIBLE 2014. Triple 350 Yamahas, hardtop, tow eye, extra batteries. She is set up as a tender with all the bells and whistles. Garmin electronics, dive door, forward seating, custom painted hull and motors, bow thruster, etc. Warranty until 2020! Contact Worldwide Central Agent.

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48' Viking Convertible 2004

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35' 2001, 3208 CAT's, \$125,000 Call Chris Fox
35' 2003, 450hp CATS, \$185,000 Call Chris Fox
35' 1994 3208 CAT's \$85,000 Call Chris Fox



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IF YOUR FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND IS ONE OF YOUR FISHING BUDDIES, SEND US A PHOTO OF IT OFFSHORE TO BE INCLUDED IN OUR ONLINE GALLERY AT MARLINMAG.COM/BOATDOGS.

MAN'S BEST FISHING FRIEND

You're never in need of a fishing buddy when you have a dog

BY DAVE FERRELL

One of the many positive aspects of keeping track of your friends on Facebook, Instagram, Periscope or whatever is that we get to see a glimpse of their fishing exploits, no matter where they are or who they are with. More and more often, it seems, their photos of big-fish catches are punctuated by a furry, four-legged photo bomber of one dog breed or another.

Throughout human history, dogs have played an important role in many aspects of life. Working dogs helped provide meat by assisting during hunts; they provided protection for the family, carried loads during long marches and even became an invaluable mode of transportation in the form of sled dogs in northern climes. But

as much as dogs help us through their hard work, perhaps their greatest contribution comes from their companionship and loyalty.

As many of you know, it's not always easy to find someone to go fishing with. Busy schedules and the hectic carnival of family life can keep your buddies at the dock more often than not. And because fishing is infinitely more fun when you can share the experience, sometimes you wind up staying home instead of going alone. A good fishing dog can put an end to that little dilemma.

I met my first real fishing dog while I was dating my wife, over 23 years ago. Her brother's good friend owned a boat and a jet-black three-legged Labrador mix named Sharky. I can't remember how Sharky lost his leg, but by the way he got around on the boat and his love to be in the water, I'm sure he'd forgotten as well. After spending several days with him, I vowed that one day I'd try to find myself a true water dog just like him.

I eventually picked Charlie from a litter of Jack Russell terriers one of my co-workers put up for adoption — she was the fattest of the lot, and I thought she'd make a fine dog. Unfortunately, the breeder felt the same way and picked her out after I'd already

chosen. A little heartbroken, I passed on the remaining dogs in the litter. Two weeks later, my friend called and said the breeder had decided one more dog was too much for her household and asked if I still wanted the puppy. I brought her home that day.

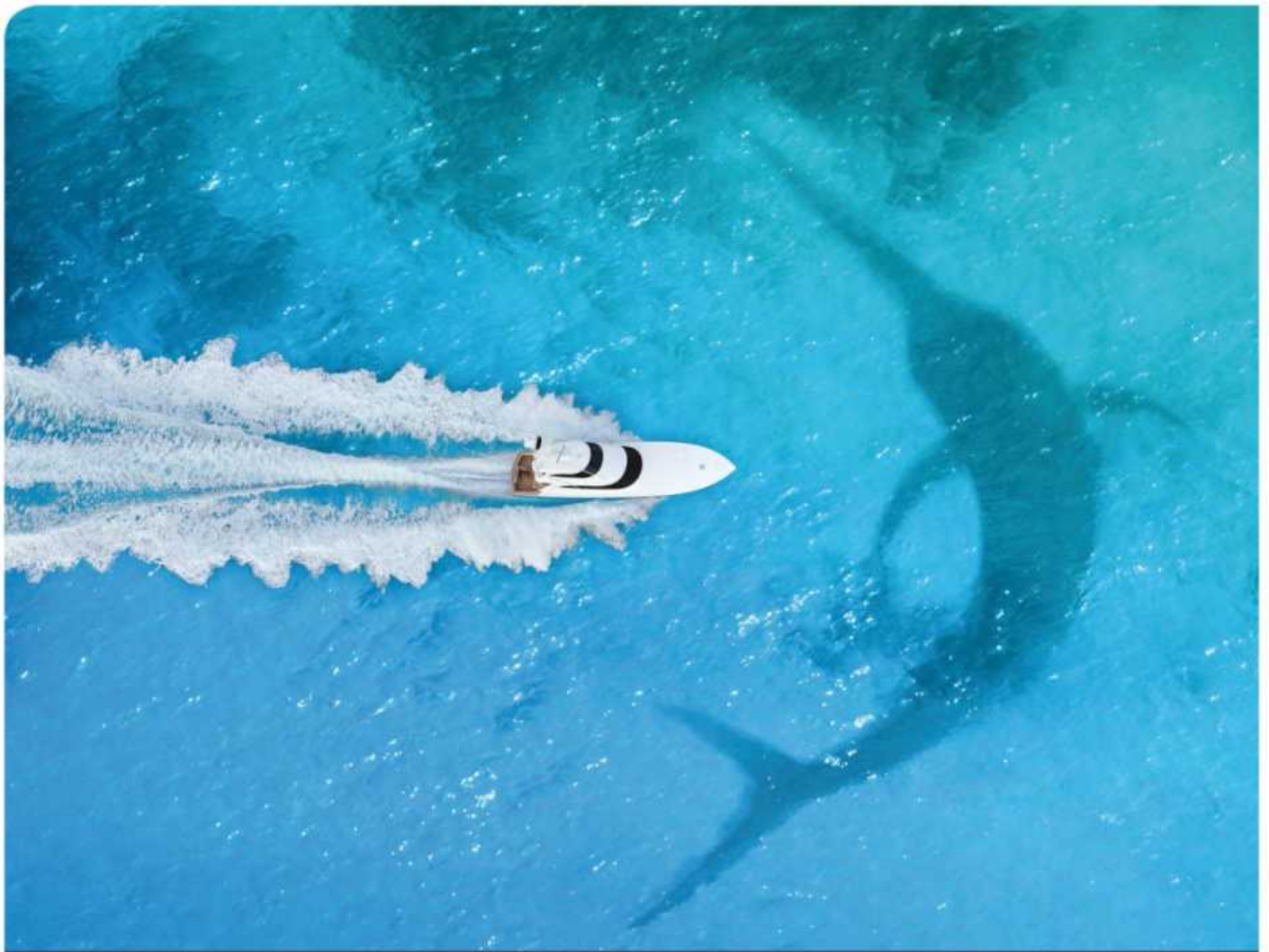
Charlie, like all Jack Russells, had no sense of her small size; she'd attack just about any dog on sight, and it almost cost her life on two occasions. Other than that, she was a smart, loving dog that really loved to go fishing. A whisper of the word or a move toward a rod would send her into a spasm of leaps, yelps and howls that could wake the dead. She'd hit the front door running and wouldn't stop until we got back home. In her later years, I had her up in Destin, Florida, over Easter break, and I took her out fishing with Capt. Pat Dineen, looking for some early cobia on the beach. Charlie hit the boat with her usual enthusiasm, but soon the chilly temps and cold water got to her old bones, and it was clear she wasn't liking the trip. When we got back to the dock, she sprinted off the boat toward the truck and wouldn't come back. It was one of the first times she didn't come to me when I called her. She was pushing 14 years old at the time, so I figured it would be her last trip, and it was; she died in my arms the next spring.

After about a year, my wife decided I was ready for another dog — one of her co-workers just so happened to have a litter of Jack Russell puppies up for adoption. I'm a sucker for little girl dogs, so I picked Skipper out of the bunch. Skipper is 2 years old now, and she's a bit sweeter version of Charlie. She's timid around other dogs, and she's a lot nicer to the fish when they hit the deck — distributing kisses instead of a death grip on the throat. You've gotta love a Jack Russell. 🐾



Davis Hardesty (right) says his Labrador, Dixie, likes to go offshore fishing more than she likes to duck hunt.

COURTESY DAVIS HARDESTY (LEFT), © LIFE ON WHITE / ALAMY (TOP)



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